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A N
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T O
Dr. P R I E S T L Y,

UPON HIS
Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity
Illustrated.

By J A C O B B R Y A N T, Esq.

L O N D O N :
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ERRATUM.

P. 127. l. 18. for *antients* read *ancients*.

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A N
A D D R E S S
T O
Dr. PRIESTLY, &c.

S I R,

IT was but lately, on account of some avocations, that an opportunity was afforded me of reading over your Treatise, upon Necessity; which however I had for some time longed to accomplish: as it was a subject, which I had much considered; and had indeed long since, for my private satisfaction, written down my thoughts upon it. When I did at last take your treatise in hand, I formed a resolution not to be too hasty in my conclusions: but to read it over with that attention and care, which every thing deserves, that proceeds from

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a person so justly celebrated, as Dr. Priestly. It will be unnecessary, and idle, to detain you with any further prefatory discourse: on which account I shall only take the liberty of giving you this short information at setting out, that I cannot by any means accede to the principles, which you lay down; nor abide by your conclusions. Upon the most diligent inquiry I am persuaded, that mankind have a self-determining power. That upon mature deliberation, and just reasoning, they can make a free and proper election: and can not only choose, but reject, as shall seem best to their judgment. In short they are not tied down by that absolute *Necessity*, under which you lay them: nor are affected by that overbearing influence, and chain of causes, which according to your opinion have been irresistibly operating from the very commencement of time. You say in the course of your treatise, that the *Necessity*, of which you treat, is not the Predestination of the *Calvinists*, nor the Fate of the *Ancients*: (Preface, p. xxiii.) a circumstance, which I shall not take upon me at present to controvert. This is certain upon your own evidence, through the whole course of your writing, however you may sometimes soften

and qualify it, that the Necessity, of which you treat, is no other than fixed Fate, and unavoidable * Predestination.

SECTION I.

YOU may perhaps in some degree answer me, by saying, that at your very beginning, when you take in hand to treat of Liberty and Necessity; you give full scope to the powers of man: and allow him all the freedom that can be wished, in respect both to thinking and acting. It must be confessed, that you do: but how this corresponds with your assertions afterwards, will be our future consideration. It may be want of discernment on my side, which prevents my uniformly perceiving the force of your arguments: but to the best of my judgment, the concessions, which you make at the beginning, are inconsistent with what you say afterwards. They seem to be contradicted through the whole course of your treatise. However, as you assure us, that philosophical necessity may be made to agree very well with human freedom, let us apply to your own words, where you first speak upon the subject.

* See p. 162.

In the first place, I would observe, that I allow to man all the liberty or power, that is possible in itself, and to which the ideas of mankind in general ever go; which is the power of doing whatever they will or please, both with respect to the operations of their minds, and the motions of their bodies, uncontrolled by any foreign principle or cause. Thus every man is at liberty to turn his thoughts to whatever subject he pleases, to consider the reasons for or against any scheme or proposition, and to reflect upon them as long as he shall think proper; as well as to walk wherever he pleases, and to do whatever his hands and other limbs are capable of doing. p. 2. I pass over the passage, which you quote from Mr. Hobbes, as well as that from Mr. Wollaston. The latter gentleman, a person of great learning, was a strong advocate for human liberty, and has brought the clearest arguments in defence of it: and you tell us that you allow them, p. 3. Now, if I am not under an illusion, the whole seems to me a paradox: nor can I account for your making these concessions; as they seem so inconsistent with the principles, which you elsewhere maintain. And though you may with great ingenuity attenuate and soften, what you say, and make use of

many

many restrictions ; yet I do not see, how you can abide by what you have allowed ; and make any compromise between freedom and necessity. You acknowledge in your preface, that you have given up the doctrine of *liberty*. Pref. p. xxxi. And in another place you tell us, that *the two schemes of liberty and necessity admit of no medium between them.* p. 84. How can these jarring principles be made to agree?

As you have however in the passage above given your sanction to human liberty ; and allowed it its full force in respect both to thought and action, *uncontrolled by any foreign power* ; let us see by what means it is, that you bring it afterwards under the thralldom of necessity : and how can you reconcile what you have said in one place with that, which you maintain in another ? It may possibly be want of perception in me ; but after the concessions made about human liberty, I do not see what there is, of which you can possibly abridge it. Let us then, without any reserve, have in the most clear and precise manner your opinion upon this subject. Your words are these.—*All the liberty, or rather power, that I say a man has not, is that of doing several things, when all*

the previous circumstances (*including the state of his mind, and his views of things*) are *precisely the same*. p. 7. It may be, as I have before said, a want of apprehension in me: but I cannot after repeatedly considering the premises, see the force of this argument. However let us follow you, as you proceed—" *What I contend for is, that, with the same state of mind, the same strength of any particular passion, for example, and the same views of things, as any object appearing equally desirable, he would always, voluntarily, make the same choice, and come to the same determination. For instance, if I make any particular choice to-day, I should have done the same yesterday, and shall do the same to-morrow, provided there be no change in the state of my mind respecting the object of my choice.* Permit me for to stop here for a minute, in order to remark, that I think it impossible for a person to be so precisely in the same state of mind and body, as is above described, after any interval of time. Besides the mind is often so fickle, and circumstances so indifferent, that we choose, as we say, at hazard, and with little or no consideration. . So that it is hardly credible, that the same thing should be uniformly at different times the same object of our election. If an
hundred

hundred lottery tickets in a series of numbers were laid before a person, void of all whim and prejudice, who was to choose one; he would with great indifference lay his hand upon that which might seem most readily to present itself. If the same were to be postponed for a day or two, it would be just an hundred to one, whether he made the same option. But in reality no mind is so constant, nor body so uniform, as to be at different intervals *precisely the same*.

p. 7. But should we grant your premises, still, if in the same circumstances repeated a *man would always, as you allow, voluntarily make the same choice*: it is plain, that he would not do it necessarily; and must therefore be at all times in a state of liberty. For though a person were to repeat the same action ever so often: yet if he does it voluntarily, he must be in respect to choice free. You can never from a voluntary act infer necessity.

I am sorry for this interruption, and will now give the reader your farther elucidation of the premises.—*In other words, I maintain that there is some fixed law of nature respecting the will as well as the other powers of the mind, and every thing else in the constitution of nature; and*

that consequently it is never determined without some real and apparent cause, foreign to itself, i. e. without some motive of choice, or that motives influence us in some definite, and invariable manner : so that every volition, or choice, is constantly regulated, and determined, by what precedes it. Permit me here to make a short pause, and consider what has been said ; for being rather short-sighted I am apt to overlook the clue, which should lead me, and am soon lost in a maze. As to *nature* and *the law of nature* I know not what to say about them. They seem to be terms, to which we have often recourse by way of subterfuge, when we are treating of properties, for which we cannot account. But upon this I shall not dwell ; as that which follows demands our immediate attention. For you assert, if I mistake not, that the mind with all its powers, and particularly the will, is *never determined without some real or apparent cause, foreign to itself.* p. 8. Now I am as much at a loss as I was before. For it seems impossible to make, what you say here, consistent with that, which you maintained above. In this place the will, and the mind in general, must be determined by a foreign cause : if we look but six pages backward we find just the contrary

contrary asserted—viz. that men are quite free to do, *whatever they will or please, both with respect to the operations of their own minds, and the motions of their bodies, uncontrolled by any foreign principle or cause.* p. 2. This seems to be an absolute contradiction: but possibly as we go on we may have it cleared up. To proceed then.—*And this constant determination of mind according to the motives presented to us, is all, that I mean by its necessary determination. This being admitted, there will be a necessary connection between all things past, present, and to come, in the way of proper cause and effect, as much in the intellectual as in the natural world; so that how little soever the bulk of mankind may be apprehensive of it, or staggered by it, according to the established laws of nature, no event could have been otherwise, than it has been, is, or is to be, and therefore all things, past, present, and to come, are precisely, what the Author of nature really intended them to be, and has made provision for.* p. 8. I take the liberty to make answer, that in respect to the Author of nature, I think that we often introduce him with too little reverence, and determine about his purposes too boldly. And it seems to me inexplicable, that this all-wise Being should give
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to man a full power of choice, which you allow, that he did: and that he should at the same time lay him under an irresistible influence, and render the gift useless and abortive,

SECTION II.

WE come now to your second chapter, in which you try to enforce *the same doctrine from the consideration of cause and effect.* We have perceived above, that the mind of man, which was said to be quite at liberty either to choose or reject; and in all its operations free from any foreign power and impulse, is at last tied down by a blind necessity, and is obliged to determine by an external overbearing influence; so that whatever has happened, could not have been otherwise, according to *the fixed laws of nature.* You go on to explain farther what you have before said. You inform us, that there is a series of parts, which are connected like the links of a chain: and that they necessarily follow one after another; and are dependent upon a first mover, whose original energy passes through the whole;—*so that unless the fundamental laws of the system were changed, it would be impossible, that any event*
should

should have been otherwise, than it was; just as the precise place where a billiard-ball rests is necessarily determined by the impulse given at first, notwithstanding its impinging against ever so many other balls, or the sides of the table, p. 9, 10. I hope, I have not misquoted your words, nor misrepresented your meaning. You go on to tell us, that this chain of causes and effects cannot be broken, but by such a provision in the constitution of nature, as that the same event shall not certainly follow the preceding circumstances. In this case indeed it might be truly said, that any particular event might have been otherwise than it was, there having been no certain provision in the laws of nature for determining it to be this rather than that. But then this event, not being preceded by any circumstances, that determined it to be what it was, would be an effect without a cause. For a cause cannot be defined to be any thing but such previous circumstances as are constantly followed by a certain effect; the constancy of the result making us conclude, that there must be a sufficient reason in the nature of the things why it should be produced in those circumstances. So that in all cases, if the result be different, either the circumstances must have been different, or there were no circumstances whatever

corresponding

corresponding to the difference of the result; and consequently the effect was without any cause at all. — These maxims are universal, being equally applicable to all things, that belong to the constitution of nature corporeal or mental, &c. p. 10, 11. I must confess, that I do not perfectly understand this process of your argument: however I quote at large; as it may meet with others, who are blessed with a better apprehension. The same manner of reasoning is pursued, p. 13. *A particular determination of mind could not have been otherwise than it was, if the laws of nature respecting the mind be such, as that the same determination shall constantly follow the same state of mind, and the same views of things. And it could not be possible for any determination to have been otherwise than it has been, is, or is to be, unless the laws of nature had been such, as that though both the state of mind, and the views of things, were the same, the determination might or might not have taken place. But in this case the determination must have been an effect without a cause, because in this case, as in that of the balance, there would have been a change of situation without any previous change of circumstances: and there cannot be any other definition of an effect without a cause. The application of*
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the term voluntary to mental determinations cannot possibly make the least difference in this case.

If the laws of nature be such as that in given circumstances, I constantly make a definite choice, my conduct through life is determined by the Being who made me, and placed me in the circumstances in which I first found myself. For the consequence of the first given circumstances was a definite voluntary determination, which bringing me into other circumstances was followed by another definite determination. Upon no scheme whatever can this chain of situations of mind, and consequent mental determinations, or of causes and effects be broken. Besides if one effect might take place without a sufficient cause, another, and all effects, might have been without a cause: which entirely takes away the only argument for the being of a God. p. 14, 15. I would not willingly cavil: and I should be sorry to do any injustice to your arguments. I can perceive in them much labour and subtilty; but they confound rather than convince: so that, believe me good sir, I scarcely know, where I am; or upon what ground I stand. I have been one while told,*

* See p. 17. concerning this indissoluble chain of circumstances and effects.

that man has a power of doing, whatever he pleases, uncontrolled by any foreign principle or power, p. 2. You in a few pages after assure me, p. 8. that the mind and will is always determined by a cause *foreign* to itself. And you go on to prove this by various arguments, shewing in this very page, that no determination could have been otherwise than it *has been, or is*: for we are under positive decrees: and, though the term itself is kept out of sight, in a state of absolute * predestination. Hence our will is subject to an unavoidable influence: and every thought antecedently determined. But when this has been thus settled, you seem somehow to compromise matters, and after all to allow to the mind some power of judging for itself: the result of which you term a *definite choice*; and a *definite voluntary determination*. By this, if I apprehend you right, is meant, that a man has a *partial* and *limited* power of election. But in another part of your work you assert, that *in the scheme of liberty and necessity there is no medium*. p. 84. How then can we admit of

* This towards the end is more evidently acknowledged. See the Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity, p. 162.

this compromise? and by what means can these different assertions be rendered consistent? After all that you have been so good as to explain, I am still left to ask, whether I am free or not free: for as to this qualifying medium I know not what to make of it; as you do not sufficiently either define, or prove it; and at the same time it seems to militate against your own avowed principles. I therefore again request to know in respect to my thoughts and actions, whether I am *voluntarily* or *necessarily* determined. To this you have in a manner antecedently replied: and seem to think, that there is an impropriety in the very stating of such a question. *It may perhaps help to clear up this matter to some persons, to consider, that voluntary is not opposed to necessary, but only to involuntary, and that nothing can be opposed to necessary but contingent,* p. 15.

Excuse me, good sir, for I would not without cause presume to dissent from you: but your distinction, unless my logic fails me, cannot be true. For what are we to understand by the word *contingent*, but something casual and fortuitous: something, which proceeds
from

from chance. But chance does not in reality exist, and the term should be banished from all philosophical inquiries. Chance and contingency are quite opposite to your principles, who reduce all things, even our most airy thoughts, the wild flights of imagination, to the rigid rule of cause and effect. This contrast therefore with submission cannot be admitted. And in respect to what you have said, that voluntary is not opposed to *necessary*, but only to *involuntary*; what is involuntary but another word for necessary? They seem to me to be in a manner synonymous. Whatever we do involuntarily we do by necessity: and on the other hand, when we act voluntarily, we act freely: so that when we bring involuntary in opposition to voluntary, it is the same thing as opposing necessity to freedom. As the premises do not seem to be good, I pass over the inferences, which are made from them: as well as your answer to some of your opponents, who have differed from you in opinion. Towards the conclusion you repeat, that there are motives, to which man is obliged to submit; and *if in fact he never do act contrary to their influence, it can only be because he has no power so to do: and therefore he is subject*
to

to an absolute necessity, &c. p. 18. I mention this to shew after all your concessions the ultimate to which you bring us.

As the whole of your system is founded upon the doctrine of cause and effect; it may be worth our while to consider what you have been pleased to say further upon this subject. You maintain, that there is *a necessary connection between all things, past, present, and to come, in the way of proper cause and effect, as much in the intellectual, as in the natural world: so that how little soever the bulk of mankind may be apprehensive of it, or staggered by it; according to the established laws of nature, no event could have been otherwise than it has been, is, or is to be.* p. 8. The like is again enforced p. 13—*It could not be possible for any determination to have been otherwise than it has, is, or is to be.* And further you say, that as a man acts at one time, so he would act at all times in the same circumstances: *For instance, if I make any particular choice to-day, I should have done the same yesterday and shall do the same to-morrow, provided there be no change in my mind respecting the object of the choice.* p. 7. The limitation at the close seems unnecessary; because there can be no

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change

change in a mind, which is uniformly acted upon by the same foreign power. *For you maintain that there is a fixed law of nature respecting the will.* p. 7. The same influence must produce like effects: And you further intimate, p. 9. as well as in other places, that there was an original system established, and a primary impulse given, upon which every thing depends; *and unless the fundamental laws of the system were changed, it would be impossible, that any event should have been otherwise than it was: just as the precise place, where a billiard-ball rests, is necessarily determined by the impulse given to it at first, notwithstanding its impinging against ever so many balls, or the sides of the table.* p. 10. You elsewhere take notice of a vast series of events, which you term *an indissoluble chain of circumstances and effects, so that nothing could have been otherwise than it is.* p. 17. All these events took their rise from an original impulse, which has been carried on for ages through the whole system: and is termed *a law of nature.* Whatever therefore a person does at one time, he would in the same situation do at another: and as both situation and disposition are determined by the same influence and law, which you at other times comprehend under the term necessity;

sity; a man, if in the same situation, would after the greatest interval of time act precisely in the same manner. This, Sir, is your opinion: by which you endeavour to shew that the will is not free: and, as you presume, that when the same objects are presented, it would at all times make the same choice, you from hence conclude that it is under an unavoidable necessity. These laws, and this necessity, extend to the physical as well as the moral and intellectual world. From these principles, which you lay down, that all in the same situation would after any interval act precisely as they have done, it follows, that if the world were renewed, all the same occurrences would necessarily happen again. If after ever so many myriads of ages a man were formed in the same manner, and in the same circumstances, as the person from whom we are all descended; he would act exactly as Adam is presumed to have acted: he would have the same posterity: they would travel over the same ground; find out the same arts at the same periods; and perform without the least deviation all and every of those things, which have been already performed. Every step, they should take, would be found the same: every look, every

turn, every involuntary gesture, would be repeated. The winds would blow with the same variation; the rain must fall to a drop, and even the thousandth part of a drop, as it had done before. The very dust, and the smallest motes, which float in any medium, would be in number and quality the same. For according to your principles the same original impulse must be attended with the like consequences. And if we allow a failure in the smallest degree, there must be ultimately an unavoidable difference through the whole arrangement. But such difference is inconsistent with that primary influence, and that necessity which you maintain. There must therefore be a perfect similarity throughout. These are the necessary consequences from your principles: but, I believe, nobody will be persuaded, that this would ever obtain. Let any person, after he has signed his name, try to write it three or four times precisely in the same manner; and see whether it perfectly accords. If he cannot do it, when he undertakes it with premeditation, he will hardly bring it to perfection, when he acts without design. Or let him walk an hundred yards, and then try to pace the same ground at the like intervals,

intervals, and in the same time. If he could not perform it immediately; he would not effect it at the distance of three days, or thirty days: much less after an interval of ages.

But granting that people in the same circumstances would always act uniformly in the same manner: yet in respect to the mind and the freedom of choice, I do not see how they are at all affected. If I had full liberty to choose in one instance, I should have the same in another; and even if I were to repeat it an hundred times. You insist, that the repetition of the same act must be the effect of necessity. But if that, which I do, be the result of forecast and reason, it will at all times be an instance of my freedom in respect to election. We should, in all the cases supposed, be led by inducements; and those inducements would arise from consideration, and judgment: by which we should be inclined to make our option. But you throughout make no distinction between inducement, and necessity: between inclination and force. Whenever we hesitate, deliberate, and choose, you think, we are impelled past all resistance: and from

this freedom of election would infer a total want of liberty.

Let us still farther consider this series of events, this indissoluble chain of causes, upon which your system is founded. These according to your principles are derived from a primary influence, which operates universally. This influence you think is never impeded; and the chain of causes never interrupted: so that the operations of our minds are by these means necessarily determined. Motive arises from motive: and one idea produces another; and this inevitably: so that the mind, as you affirm, has no determining power. But may I ask, Sir, if you have ever considered the state of sleep? What connexion has the last idea of a man, when he sinks at night into oblivion, with the first thought, which occurs to him upon his awaking in the morning? We have reason to think, that there is scarcely a revolution of four and twenty hours, but this indissoluble chain is interrupted. At the same season the original impulse must cease, and can no longer operate upon the mental faculties. You will perhaps say, that men think in their sleep, as is evident from their dreams. But do

do all men dream ? or if they do, what ensues, but a train of irregular and incoherent ideas, which are unconnected with one another, and quite independent of all foreign and remote influence. But setting these things aside, have you considered the state of persons, who suffer a deliquium ? during which there seems to be a total loss of sensation. There have been instances of people drowned ; who, before they have been recovered, have lain for hours in a state of death, deprived of every vital faculty. Have you ever reflected upon persons in such a situation ? In these instances the connexion spoken of must have been entirely broken off. If then the mind has no internal power of its own, by what means does it renew its train of thoughts ; and how is it able to think again at all ? The last idea, when it sunk into forgetfulness, and the first, which occurred, when it languished into day, cannot possibly have had any relation to each other. There has been a manifest breach in the chain : and the primary influence, if it existed, must have been in like manner interrupted. From whence then does the mind recover itself : and what impression is it, which sets the train of ideas in motion ; and oftentimes brings the mind into the

same track of thinking? Is the influence from within or from without? It cannot be any external impulse: for in these circumstances no immediate operation of the senses can make a person recur to events long past; and to prior affections, which the mind may possibly at such season recollect. The immediate impulse of the senses, and the surrounding objects, cannot bring this about. And as to original influence, of which you treat, and the chain of causes: there has been a stop put to the whole; and the connexion no longer subsists. This power of recollection must therefore be from within, and is undoubtedly owing to a peculiar energy of the mind; a power of self-exertion: by which it is enabled to call up and arrange its ideas at pleasure: and to determine upon them, as shall seem best. And in consequence of this we may conclude, that the will is not under any arbitrary and blind influence; nor directed by necessity: but on the contrary there is a freedom of choice; which is oftentimes the result of long deliberation, and judgment.

But why need we go so far to find out, that in the series of events so often mentioned, and in this lengthened chain of causes, there is nothing,

thing, which is necessarily coercive? You indeed tell me, Sir, that every thought is pre-determined: and in every act of volition I am forcibly impelled: so that I could not in any instance have made my election otherwise than I have done. Every movement of the mind, you say, arises from a *pressing uneasiness*. This theory may appear specious: but it seems to run counter to all experience: and the contrary, if I mistake not, is self-evident. I sit at this instant at my ease, in a calm and dispassionate state of mind; as you are pleased Sir, to recommend *. I perceive myself at full liberty: and know not of any external impulse to determine me either in my thoughts or actions. I purpose to move: but antecedently examine, whether I am under any bias, or necessity: or directed by any foreign power. I find none. In the vast series of causes, so often mentioned, I do not perceive one, that will have any share in the effect, which I am about to produce. The whole originates in myself, whether I move my body; or my arm: or am content with extending a finger. The like appears in respect to my thoughts. I am here equally free; and among the various objects,

* See C. ix. p. 106.

which

which are ready at my call, I arbitrarily choose those, to which my fancy leads me. You tell me, that every thought is an effect; and that it is connected with a prior idea, by which it was produced. I cannot see any such uniform affinity or correspondence: and to give a proof of my liberty and independence, I will for once expatiate freely, and produce a series of unconnected ideas from my own imagination. I accordingly, without any pressing uneasiness, think of a tree; of time; of the ocean; of darkness; of a cone; of truth; of a tower; of probability; of Therfites; of love; of Epidaurus; of Socrates; of a mite; of casuistry; of the Iliad; of Otaheite; of Tenterden steeple; of a mole; of a mouse-trap. In doing this I did not find, that I was restrained by any law of nature: or impelled by any foreign power. Nor can I at last perceive that these desultory thoughts have the least connexion with one another: much less with any prior ideas. You assure me, that they must unavoidably have a reference; and that they are dependent upon others, which have preceded. In short according to your principles they arose so necessarily in my mind, that five days hence, or five years hence, in the same circumstances,

cumstances, and with the same disposition, I should infallibly make the very same choice. But this seems contrary to experience; for though I am as precisely in the same circumstances, as we can suppose any man to be; and likewise in the same disposition of mind, yet, after an interval of a very few minutes, I am not able to go over the fourth part of this series. And however cogent the necessity may be, I can recollect very little more than the mole and the mouse-trap.

I should think, nothing could more plainly shew, that your system is not well grounded, than the power, which we so intimately experience of recollection, and reflexion. Instead of proceeding in a regular series of ideas, I can at any time pause for a season: and then revert abruptly to what has passed; and recapitulate my thoughts and actions, as far back, as memory will carry me. You will say, as usual, that *there must be a motive for this*. We will grant that there may be: for instance a prospect of future good, or immediate satisfaction. But this motive often arises at my will, and proceeds from my own bosom: where that faculty, that energy, is lodged; by which these effects are produced. What I
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in this manner perform is my own act intirely; unconnected with any series, for which you contend; and uninfluenced by any foreign power.

S E C T I O N III.

YOUR third section contains—An argument for *Necessity* from the *Divine Prescience*. In this among other things you assert, that *upon the doctrine of Philosophical Liberty, the Divine Being could not possibly foresee what would happen in his own creation: and therefore could not provide for it.* p. 19. In another place you speak to the same purpose. *To all minds the pre-telling of a contingent event is equally a matter of conjecture: consequently even infinite knowledge makes no difference in this case. For knowledge supposes an object, which in this case does not exist; and therefore cannot be known to exist. If man be possessed of a power of proper self-determination, the Deity himself cannot controll it (as far as he interferes, it is no self-determination of the man) and if he does not controll it, he cannot foresee it.* p. 21. Surely, Sir, this is very bold, even to a degree of rashness: and at the same time your mode of reasoning

soning seems to my judgment totally inconclusive. It may, I think, be obviated by a thousand circumstances in common life. A child may determine to take a walk in a garden : and I may have a power of controlling his purpose. But how does my tacit, and quiescent, power at all influence, or prevent, his self-determination. But you intimate, that if I do not controll it (the child's purpose) I *cannot foresee it*. This too is very strange : for I cannot conceive how my not exerting one power takes away another. I sow a field with wheat : and, if I pleased, I could make an alteration by ploughing it up and sowing it with rye, or barley. But I cannot see how the mere power of varying my purpose can ruin that purpose, and hinder my hope and prospect of a good harvest. In short you make no distinction between what the Deity can do, and what he really does : and you argue, as if power and performance were the same. You moreover in a parenthesis observe, that *as far as he (the Deity) interferes, it is no self-determination of the man*. Most undoubtedly : If any person determines for him, it is not his own determination. This is a self-evident truth, to which I readily subscribe ;

but

but I do not see how it makes for your purpose.

You however proceed to enforce your argument by the authority of Mr. Hobbes, by whom you think the affair has been satisfactorily stated. *Denying Necessity*, says this writer (Works, p. 485) *destroys both the decrees and prescience of Almighty God. For whatever God has purposed to bring to pass by man, as an instrument, or foresees shall come to pass, a man if he has liberty, might frustrate, and make not come to pass; and God should either not foreknow it, and not decree it; or he shall foreknow such things shall be, as shall never be, and decree what shall never come to pass.* What a rash, contemptible and short-sighted reptile is man! Who would think that this insect of a day would presume to limit omniscience, and control the powers of the Almighty? Bold and inconsiderate! to form a judgment of the divine energy by his own scanty faculties; and endeavour to reduce his Creator to the standard of man. Besides, what a round of absurdity is there in this weak and impious supposition? One would imagine, that none but an idiot could have stated such a case, wherein things
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are supposed to be foreknown, which *shall never be* ; and things decreed in consequence of fore-knowledge which *shall never come to pass* : is short where it is said, that what God foresees is not foreseen : for it may be *frustrated* by man, and rendered ineffectual. This, Sir, is the argument, which you think is *clearly stated*.

The experience, which we gain from our senses comes to us by different inlets, and through a neutral medium ; so that we are never intimately acquainted with the objects, from which our notices proceed. In the operations of the mind, and the process of reasoning, we are obliged to collate and compare our several ideas ; and go through a train of inferences and deductions : and oftentimes it is not till after a long and painful investigation that we at last arrive at the truth. But, my good Sir, can you possibly think, that the knowledge of the Almighty is obtained in this servile and precarious manner ? and that his wisdom proceeds after the human mode of reasoning ? You may as well, like the Anthropomorphites, ascribe to him the eyes of a man to get intelligence, and human

limbs to perform his high operations. You tell us, that there has been from the beginning an indissoluble chain of connected events: a series of causes and effects: and these produced by an unavoidable necessity, and an irresistible influence: *so that nothing could have been otherwise than it is.* p. 17. And if this be not, as you assert; there can be no prescience in God: for by these means and these only, he is enabled to foresee. There cannot possibly be any other way, by which this attribute can be exerted. Now, Sir, I should be very unwilling to be guilty of any disrespect towards you; and to make use of any harsh expression. But surely you are highly presumptuous: not to say self-sufficient. How can you limited as you are in your faculties, and every way finite and imperfect, pretend to determine about divine intelligence? to assert, that if the Deity does not foresee things by the means, which you prescribe; that he cannot have any foresight at all? You tell me, that you believe in the scriptures; and I presume, that you are sincere. Do not you then know, that *the wisdom of man is foolishness with God.* 1 Cor. i. 19. that *his ways are higher than our ways; and his thoughts, than our thoughts?*

thoughts? Isaiah lv. 9. To whom then will ye liken me, and shall I be equal, saith the Holy one? Isaiah xl. 25. Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. Isaiah xl. 28. Thy righteousness, says the Psalmist, standeth like the great mountains: thy judgments are like the great deep. Psalm xxxvi. 6. Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord?—Who instructed, and taught him in the path of judgment,—and shewed him the way of understanding? Isaiah xl. 13. 14. This last, Sir, I am sorry to say, is the part, which you have taken by pretending to prescribe to the Deity. You have joined yourself with those, who say,—How doth God know, and is there wisdom in the Most-High? Psalm lxxiii. 11. And thou sayest, How doth God know? Can he judge through the dark cloud? Job xxii. 13. In what manner does the same sacred writer finally determine this point? Attend, Sir, for he settles the whole in these few, but important, words. He be- holdeth all high things. He is a king over all the children of pride. Job xli. 34: From the quotations above given, we may learn to humble ourselves, when we speak of our Creator; and

to mention his divine attributes with reverence. If his judgments and counsels be like the *great deep*, they are past our ability to fathom. Besides, Sir, if I may be permitted to speak to you with freedom, there seems to be a fundamental mistake, that runs through your long course of arguing; by which your whole system is affected. We have heard you speak of cause and effect; of motive and influence; also of a chain of causes, and a long train of connexions, which have reached downwards from the commencement of things. Now we will grant, that in the tide of time there has been a long series of events; that they have followed one another in an uniform succession, and after an interval of many ages they are at last come down to us. Let all this be in some degree * allowed: yet when once we become engaged in the series; we are not totally passive, and impotently driven on like the waves in a stream: *velut unda supervenit undâ*: nor are we blindly impelled like *a ball at a billiard-table*. We take a share in this train of events; and as

* We may allow, but with some limitation, that every cause has been effect and every effect a cause. This in general may be granted in respect to the common occurrences in life. But connexion does not prove necessity.

far as our influence reaches, they are carried on in great measure according to our own purposes ; and in consequence of our will and judgment. And in respect to motives and incitements, we can often either submit to them, or oppose them ; according as it may appear to us best upon due consideration. This power we manifestly experience : we feel it intimately. You too are obliged to own it, though you deny it afterwards : and endeavour to make it void. But all the theory in the world is nothing, when opposed to experimental knowledge. You err in this : you make no distinction between a cause, and an irresistible influence ; between a simple motive, and a cogent force ; between connexion and necessity. You do not consider, that in the series, of which you treat, many things may have been consequential, and by no means necessary. They might have been varied at the will of man ; however you may disallow it : and a different train of things might have been propagated, without any impeachment of the prescience of God.

You proceed to tell us, *that many of the most zealous advocates for the doctrine of philosophical*

liberty, aware of its inconsistency with the doctrine of the divine prescience, have not scrupled to give up the latter altogether. They must then give up the scriptures at the same time: and with the scriptures their religion and faith. For in the sacred writings the foreknowledge of the Deity is not only inculcated as a doctrine, but proved by a variety of events. *With respect to such persons, you say, I can only repeat what I have said upon this subject in my examination of the writings of Dr. Beattie: p. 173.* And here I must observe, that you yourself deny this great attribute except upon your own principles: and those, who do not admit your principles, you suppose equally to deny it. But surely this is injurious, and not agreeable to truth. Let us however see, what you say upon this head to Dr. Beattie. *Thus our Author, in the blind rage of disputation hesitates not to deprive the ever-blessed God of that very attribute, by which in the books of Scripture he expressly distinguishes himself from all false gods: and than which nothing can be more essentially necessary to the government of the universe, rather than relinquish his fond claim to the fancied privilege of self-determination: a claim, which appears to me, to be just as absurd, as that of self-existence,*
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and which could not possibly do him any good, if he had it.

What is more extraordinary, this power he arrogates to himself without pretending to advance a single rational argument in favour of his claim; but expects it will be admitted on the authority of his instinctive common sense only. And yet if a man expresses the least indignation at such new and unheard of arrogance, and in an argument of such importance as this, what exclamation and abuse must he not expect?

As to Dr. Beattie's argument, I must leave it to his own management and skill to be defended. In respect to the gentleman himself I can only say, that I am not totally unacquainted with him: and he appears to be a person of consummate goodness and candour: and of great elegance and erudition, and he is so described by all, who have the happiness more intimately to know him. I cannot therefore conceive, how he could deserve so severe a censure. For in truth these are cruel allegations: and upon the fairest computation amount to little less than *ignorance, arrogance, and impiety*. And after all I do not find, that

he has denied any thing but your premises; which has brought upon him this heavy charge. You might upon the same principles stile him an atheist, and make him deny his Creator. But let us stop here; and it were well, if we could draw a veil over what has preceded, that it might be had no more in remembrance.

You may perhaps ask me, *if the divine prescience does not depend upon the causes which you have allotted, from whence does it arise?* In truth I do not presume to judge. It is a wonderful attribute; far, very far, above my comprehension. I cannot account for the primary affections of my own mind: I cannot tell why I stretch out my arm; and believe me, Sir, with submission, you are equally in the dark. Yet you, who do not know the secret workings of your own bosom, pretend to direct Omniscience.

SECTION IV.

YOUR fourth section is concerning the cause of volition, and the nature of the will. In this, Sir, you labour to shew in a
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very ample manner, that there is an analogy in all operations; and that as a stone tends to the ground by the force of gravity, and as the planets are all retained in their orbits by powers that draw them towards the centers of their respective motions, p. 25, so the will is under its particular influences; and is determined accordingly: and you proceed for some pages in a course of illustration to this purpose: and at last tell us, that *it cannot but be allowed by the most strenuous advocates for metaphysical liberty, that * motives have some real influence upon the mind.* p. 31. I should think, Sir, that you have expended more labour, than was requisite. Who ever asserted, that the mind was never under an influence; and, that the will was not determined by motives. The great point in question you keep out of sight; and yet in the conclusion you make your inferences, as if it had been satisfactorily proved. You in this place, as in many others, speak of influ-

* So again, p. 33. *Let a man use what words he pleases, he can have no more conception how we can sometimes be determined by motives, and sometimes without any motive, than he can of a scale being sometimes weighed down by weights, and sometimes by a kind of substance, which has no weight at all, which whatever it be in itself must in respect to the scale be nothing.*

ence and motives indefinitely : but the great question is, whether these motives are coercive : whether this influence be irresistible ; so that the mind has no power of election, and cannot by any means reject. You add, *It would be too manifest a contradiction to all experience, to assert that all objects are indifferent to us, that there is nothing in any of them, that can excite desire or aversion, or that desire or aversion have no influence upon the will, and do not incline us to decide on what is proposed to us.* Here again the chief point to be discussed is kept from us. The question is not, whether motives may not *incline* us : but whether they do not always force us. You have all along contended, that the mind is under an absolute necessity : that the will is always predetermined, and has been so from the beginning ; being inflexibly directed to one point : and now you seem to say, that it is only inclined. The thing, which you here ask, is universally granted. We all know and allow that the mind may be inclined : but we think that we are at liberty to resist the inclination. We contend, that we have a power of choice : and however pressing the motive, that we can act against the grain : and that judgment will
often

often get the better of external influence. Thus, though eagerly pressed, I can refuse food, which would prove my bane and ruin. I can resist illicit pleasure by a painful self-denial. You will tell me, that this is owing to a stronger motive ; which overcomes the weaker. This I shall not controvert. All I know is, that whatever influences there may be, we are blessed with reason, to consider and to judge : and with a power to reject or to choose. It is enjoined us in Scripture to keep judgment, to do justice, and to determine according to right : also *to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.* 1. Theff. v. 21. But injunctions of this sort would be quite unnecessary, if our will were predetermined. We therefore claim, not a metaphysical liberty, but a real power ; by which we are enabled to judge and to distinguish ; and to employ all the faculties, with which we are blessed. This power is under no blind and necessary controul, but attended with an energy of its own, which we intimately feel : and of which we are experimentally certain. What is once past, is fixed, and not to be recalled. But before any thing is determined, we have it often in our power to alter our schemes, and to vary our purposes

a thousand

a thousand ways. There may be influences and motives to incline us : but instead of merely looking back upon the past, let us look forward ; and amid the numberless invitations to thought and to action, consider, whether there be any irresistible influence, that overpowers our reason, and abridges us of a free choice. Where things are rather indifferent, the liberty for which I contend, will more plainly appear. When a fair prospect discloses itself to any person, let him ask himself, whether he be under any absolute controll, when he directs his eyes to any object : and whether any law of nature, or law of fate ; or lastly any absolute necessity, directs him solely to one point ; and prevents his expatiating freely. Let him inquire of his own heart, when he did one thing, whether he could not have done another ? And if he could with the same facility have turned to another object of operation ; then there was no absolute necessity for things being as they are. There was a possibility of their being otherwise. These truths come immediately under our cognizance ; they are proved from repeated experience. Therefore, as I before have urged, all the fine-spun theory in the world, amounts

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to nothing, when opposed to experimental certainty. You will therefore excuse me, if I say nothing about things *automatic and secondarily automatic*; of things *secondarily automatic shortened*, and *secondarily automatic extended*.

p. 41. 42. I may perhaps be greatly to be blamed for not understanding your arguments: but indeed they are too abstruse for me: I confess, that I do not comprehend them. I therefore with your permission will leave them to persons of greater sagacity: and conclude with this theorem—that *though things are, as they are, yet they might have been otherwise*.

SECTION V.

THE fifth Section is concerning the supposed consciousness of Liberty, and the use of the term Agent.

This part of your Treatise is for the most part calculated to answer the objections of Dr. Price: in which I do not think myself necessarily concerned: and therefore shall not meddle with this series of altercation: especially as I have so lately given my opinion upon this head; which needs not be here recapitulated. And

as to the dispute, Sir, between Dr. Price and yourself, whether it be motive or man, which is the agent; I must leave it as I find it. You seem to proceed upon your old principle of a chain of causes, influencing from the beginning of time: concerning which we have already explained ourselves sufficiently. In short you think, that we are always impelled by something from behind; and never led by any thing before us. But believe me, we are more influenced by the present, than by the past: and what is to come is not without its consideration.

SECTION VI.

THIS part of your discourse, like the former, contains an altercation between you and your antagonist Dr. Price: but is of greater consideration than the foregoing. Yet what you urge here, relates not always to the point in general, but to the particular opinion of your opponent. This gentleman insists with good reason, that *Liberty is essential to practical virtue*: and that a Being, which is under a foreign and necessary influence; is not accountable for his actions, or thoughts: nor
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can he be said to act virtuously or viciously. He must be a free agent, and act for himself in order to be answerable for what he does. And in this, Dr. Price says, there is no medium; nor compromise: and you have said so yourself. Hence the Doctor's inference—*Who must not feel the absurdity of saying—I determine voluntarily, and yet necessarily?* Your answer, Sir, to this, is, I think, by no means satisfactory. It is as follows. p. 57. *Here we have the same arbitrary account of agency, that has been considered before. For this is the very same whether the object of choice be of a moral nature, or not, whether it relates to different kinds of fruit, or to virtuous or vicious actions. In fact, if a virtuous resolution be formed, the person by whom it is formed, is the object of my complacence and regard: and if a vicious choice be made, the person is the object of my abhorrence, and there is the greatest use and propriety in punishing him. Believe me, Sir, you would in doing so act with the greatest injustice. For if this person is under an absolute necessity, directed and forced by a foreign impulse, as you have abundantly insisted, he cannot be accountable for what he does. You may dispute about agent and agency; and strive to evade the argument:*

gument: but the position is plain, that we cannot *determine voluntarily and yet necessarily*. If our will and determination be, as you insist, under a foreign irresistible influence, the consequences, which result from them, be they good, or be they bad, cannot be placed to our account. You speak of a *virtuous resolution being formed*, and of the person, who formed it, being entitled to *your regard*. But, pardon me, Sir, you beg the question. The very thing in dispute is, whether a person under an overpowering influence does form his own resolutions, and whether he is any more answerable for what is done, than the sword of justice directed by the executioner; or the dagger by the hand of the ruffian.

In p. 60. Dr. Price makes mention of a moral necessity in opposition to the natural necessity maintained by you: which he seems to make arise from a conscience and conviction within, and not from any external force, nor lengthened chain of causes. How true this may be, I shall not contend. He adds, *the more efficacious and unconquerable the influence of conscience is within a person, the more amiable we must think him*. p. 61. Upon this you
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make a comment. But it were to be wished, that you had endeavoured to elucidate the great truths, in which we are all concerned, from some more general principles, and not from the particular opinion of a single person. The world may not perhaps agree with Dr. Price, any more than with Dr. Priestly ; though they may both in many respects be entitled to its just esteem and regard. However you urge in consequence of this the certainty of your own positions. *It is plain therefore, that when Dr. Price does not use the language of a system, a full consent of the will, though produced by the efficacious and unconquerable influence of conscience, that is of motives, is sufficient to constitute virtue. Here therefore we see the most perfect virtue arising from the most absolute necessity, that is, if there be any meaning in words, virtue, without a possibility of man's acting otherwise than he does—* p. 63. How is it possible, good Sir, in this instance thus to deceive yourself? Or are you in reality deceived: and not rather carried on by prejudice in a case so plain? Where is it said, that the dictates of conscience are irresistible: and that whoever listens to them, is under an *unconquerable influence*, and an *absolute necessity*?

necessity ? Do we not know, that people oftentimes exclude the light, and act contrary to reason ? And do not the sacred writers speak of the consciences of men bearing witness against them ; sometimes accusing, and at other times excusing them, accordingly as they act more or less in conformity to the truth ? See Romans, c. ii. v. 15. Dr. Price, speaking in the comparative degree, makes use of this mode of expressing himself—*The more efficacious and UNCONQUERABLE the influence of conscience is within him* (i. e. any person) *the more amiable we must think him*. If in this instance he has made use of a term too strong ; the world should not be amused with inferences drawn from thence ; especially if they are contrary to his express meaning ; as at first sight will plainly appear. It is by no means fair to set aside the context, and to argue from a single word : which after all you in a great degree pervert ; and apply in a different, and even in an opposite, signification. By an influence more *efficacious*, and more *unconquerable*, he only means, the more *irresistible the influence is*, and the more determinately a man gives himself up to it, the greater is his merit : plainly intimating, that conscience, so far from being absolutely coercive,

may

may be more or less efficacious : and likewise may oftentimes be resisted and even conquered. That this is the sense of the words may be seen from all that precedes; as you have quoted from him. And though this is too manifest to be mistaken; yet you take an unfair advantage of this strong expression; and insist that he makes virtue depend upon an *unconquerable* influence * : and that according to him the most perfect virtue may arise from the most *absolute necessity*. Whereas he tells you the express contrary; and uniformly asserts, that our actions are free; and that liberty is essential to practical virtue. See p. 56. I should therefore be afraid, that you have in this instance forgot yourself; and not acted with that sincerity, which the world may have expected from you. Yet you boldly conclude, *If this be not a just inference, I do not know what is.* I fear this declaration will not be to your advantage in the opinion of your adversary. He will think, it affects either your head, or your heart.

In the course of your Treatise we are brought to some very critical and interesting arguments,

* By the more *unconquerable* he plainly means *the less liable to be conquered.*

of Dr. Price, upon which the whole seems to turn. To these we have reason to expect a very precise and determinate answer. I have not seen, what this gentleman has written; so I both here, and elsewhere, copy his words, as I find them quoted by you. *It has always been the general, and it has evidently been the natural, sense of mankind, that they cannot be accountable for what they have no power to avoid. Nothing can be more glaringly absurd than applauding, or reproaching ourselves, for what we were no more the cause of, than of our own beings, and what it was no more possible for us to prevent, than the return of the seasons, or the revolutions of the planets.* p. 64. In short the Author would fain know, what room there is for merit or blame; if all our actions proceed from necessity and force? His arguments are stated very fairly and concisely: let us see, how you reconcile these things upon your principles: how do you make virtue consistent with necessity? How can man be accountable, if he is under a constant and irresistible influence? Your whole system depends upon your answer: which is in the following words. *This is so expressed, as if the disposition of mind, which is one necessary cause of men's resolutions and actions, was*

not at all concerned. But taking in this circumstance, to which Dr. Price allows a certain and necessary operation, that which he calls a glaring absurdity is precisely his own principle; unless he will say, &c. Surely, my good Sir, this must appear very evasive. The world does not want to be engaged in your cavils with the Author, but expects a precise answer; and to have these difficulties reconciled. How can you with any justice avail yourself of the supposition that the mind's disposition is not included, or concerned in Dr. Price's argument? Besides what are we to understand by the terms *disposition of mind*, but a *mind disposed*? And if the mind of a man is at all disposed, there must have been something which disposed it. And as you uniformly through your whole treatise insist, that every thing is produced by some motive from without: that every thought, word, and action is determined by necessity: the mind according to your principles must be under the same influence, and directed by the same power. For according to your repeated opinion, *no event, neither thought, word, nor deed, could have been otherwise than it was, is, or is to be.* p. 8. If then the mind, as you say, be disposed by necessity, ascribe what you

please to the disposition of it, still our thoughts and our will are no longer our own; no more, than any of the consequences, which result from them. This you have tried to inculcate continually. Hence then arises Dr. Price's inference in consequence of your principles,—*that men cannot be accountable for what they have no power to avoid*: and that according to your system, *we can neither applaud nor reproach ourselves for any thing we do*: as we are no more *the cause of our own actions than of our own being*. p. 64. Here then is the great point, which demands an immediate answer: all which you seem to evade: and only tell us that Dr. Price has not considered, or does not seem to have considered—*disposition of mind*. But what the least authority have you for such an arbitrary supposition? Besides is not the mind, according to your own doctrine, disposed and impelled by the same unavoidable influence, by which all other things are driven? Do not you assert that the will, and consequently every thing relating to it, is under a foreign power? Tell us then in a word, how are we upon your principles accountable for any thing, which we do? Do not seduce me from the matter in hand by an account of any person's absurdity
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and contradictions: but answer to the purpose: how can we upon the principle of necessity be entitled to either reward or punishment? You answer not: but enter into dispute with Dr. Price; giving up the point in question; and at the same time giving up your whole system. What follows consists for the most part of the dispute with the same person carried on through several pages. Towards the close, though you have not afforded any proof for the truth of your principles, yet you still persist in them: and assert again, that the will is determined by the *disposition of the mind*: which you say is a *necessary determination*. p. 72. You mention, that *mankind in general do not refine so much as Dr. Price: and Dr. Price prays like other Christians and with the humility of a Necessarian*. You add, *I wish Dr. Price would consider—and I also wish Dr. Price would consider, &c.* p. 69. 70. 71. But as I know not what this gentleman has written, nor what occasion there may be for this reconsideration, I must pass by what is said upon the occasion; for I am treated with what I do not want; and am disappointed of that, which I expected.

SECTION VII.

YOU here treat of the propriety of *rewards and punishments*, and the foundation of *praise and blame*, on the scheme of *Necessity*. This has before been the subject of debate; but nothing satisfactory was afforded by you to shew the propriety here spoken of. What we have hitherto been deprived of, we hope, Sir, will now be in an ample manner explained. You begin in the following manner. *The objection to the doctrine of necessity that has weighed the most with those, who have considered the subject, is that, if men's determinations and actions flow necessarily from the previous state of their minds, and the motives or influences, to which they are exposed, the idea of responsibility, or accountableness, vanishes, and there can be no propriety, or use, of rewards or punishments.* p. 73. You will be so good as to excuse me, if I think, that this is by no means fairly stated. You soften and extenuate the supposed objection by means of ambiguous terms; of which you afterwards take an undue advantage. You are apt to speak in general where you should be particular: and in particular, where you should be general.

Those;

Those, to whom you allude, do not found their objections upon any disposition of man's mind, nor upon the influence and motives, to which it is liable, as you are pleased to surmise. They allow that virtue may arise from influence, and morality from motives: and praise and reward may in consequence of it be justly afforded. But they object to absolute necessity; by which every thing, according to your principles, *must have been as it is*: and could not possibly have been otherwise. They object to that overbearing influence, to those irresistible motives, which you maintain: such as operate so strongly, that the mind through its whole progress is blindly driven on in all its various directions, like a *ball upon a billiard-table*. This is the principle, to which they object: It is no other than absolute necessity; p. 18. in other words, fixed fate: which you now keep out of sight, and in the room of it substitute *disposition*, and *state of mind*. What your opponents insist upon is this; that where a person is not his own master, he is not responsible for his actions: and where a man is not accountable for his actions, he cannot justly be liable either to reward or punishment. This is the point, upon which they found their

objection. To my judgment you seem, Sir, often to speak with too great a latitude; as in the passage above, when you mention indeterminately—*motives*. Now there are two sorts of motives; by which the will is disposed: the one assumed by you, which is supposed to be entirely from without, and to originate in a cogent necessity: The other sort is internal, and though it may arise from different objects, yet it is not compulsory, nor does it necessarily oblige us, there being always room left for reasoning and judgment; and consequently for determination and choice. Man is endowed with a rational faculty, by which he is taught, when premises are laid before him, to compare, and to distinguish; and to make his election accordingly. If he chooses well, and acts up to the truth, he deserves praise. But if he either makes a wrong election through prejudice and wilful blindness; or if he sees the truth plainly and will not act up to the knowledge afforded him; he then is culpable: because he refuses the light offered, and abuses the best of gifts. This power of the mind, which we experimentally know to exist; and its consequences, with which we are intimately acquainted, seem by you to be set aside; or at least

least to be kept out of sight. It is true, at your first setting out you make large concessions, and allow to men a liberty of thinking and of acting, as they please. p. 2. But you afterwards overturn the whole; and tell us, that every thing has been established by absolute decrees from the beginning; that we are all necessarily directed: and consequently that there is no room for election; as all, that we do, is unalterably determined: and nothing *could be otherwise than it has been, or is*. How the power above granted is consistent with these principles, you never have, nor can, make out. In short you give liberty, and take it away. You allow it in five or six lines; and deny it for an hundred pages. The whole of your treatise is contrary to your first determination. And as you proceed uniformly upon this notion of an inevitable necessity, and those, who differ from you do not allow any such influence; you often suppose them to set aside all influence whatever: and that they do not allow any motive to either thought or action. Hence p. 85. you mention the absurdity of imagining a will acting *independently of any motive*: that *virtue without any motive would not be virtue*. You have likewise many quotations from
Mr.

Mr. Hume and others to this purpose. As if those who do not allow the influence, upon which you insist, set aside all influence whatever. This assumption is not fair : and your inferences in consequence of it by no means true.

You however proceed, Sir, to enforce your doctrine by other means : and assure us, that *there can be no use or propriety of rewards or punishments on any other scheme ; but the greatest possible upon this of necessity.* p. 74. In order to make this clearly apprehended, let us suppose two minds constructed, as I may say, upon the principles of the two opposite schemes of liberty and necessity : all the determinations of the one being invariably directed by its previous dispositions, and the motives presented to it ; while the other shall have a power of determining, in all cases, in a manner independent of any such previous disposition or motives : which is precisely the difference between the systems of necessity and liberty, philosophically and strictly defined. Here we find, what I have so often taken notice of, things softened to prevent disgust : and previous disposition, and motives (indefinitely taken) substituted in the room of absolute decrees, and predestination.

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However let us see, how you farther illustrate this point. *To avoid circumlocution let us call the former (i. e. the necessary scheme) A: and the latter (the scheme of liberty) B. I will farther suppose myself to be a father, and these two my children; and knowing their inward make and constitution, let us consider, how I shall treat them. My object is to make them virtuous and happy.*—Now since motives have a certain and necessary influence on the mind of A, I know, that the prospect of good will certainly incline him to do, what I recommend to him: and the fear of evil will deter him from any thing, that I wish to dissuade him from. p. 76. Here, Sir, your last sentence begins with the words—*Now since motives*—indeterminately. What are the motives here mentioned, and the influence of which you treat? Not any thing present and immediate certainly: for what influence can you bring to any purpose upon, what you call, a previous disposition: upon a mind already determined and under absolute control? You talk indeed of your persuasive powers, and their efficacy: but you manifestly beg the question. You take for granted, what is the very thing to be explained. You add—*that other influences indeed, to which he may be exposed,*
and

and that I am not aware of, may counteract my views, and thereby my object may be frustrated.— But notwithstanding this, my discipline will likewise have its certain and necessary effect, counteracting in part, at least, all foreign and unfavourable influence. Believe me, Sir, you have carried me in a short space through so great a maze ; that I am quite confounded. I cannot conceive how your discipline, and influence, can have a certain and necessary effect, when other influences may counteract your views, and when your object may be frustrated. Or how your advice can counteract in any degree all foreign influence ; when there is according to your own account a law of nature, and an unavoidable foreign power, by which the mind and all its operations have been originally determined. See p. 7. Yet you farther tell us, that *every promise, and every threatening, every reward and every punishment, judiciously administered, works to my end*—&c. But as there is a seeming inconsistency in all this, it is a pity that you had not reconciled the difficulties, which here occur ; before you had laid down the principles, upon which you so determinately argue. Let us now turn our eyes to the other of the two characters, by which you are to illustrate your hypothesis,

hypothesis.—*But in my son B. I have to do with a creature of quite another make. Motives have no necessary, or certain influence upon his determinations, and in all cases where the principle of freedom from the certain influence of motives takes place, it is exactly an equal chance, whether my rewards or punishments determine his actions or not. The self-determining power is not at all of the nature of any mechanical influence, that may be counter-acted by influences equally mechanical, but is a thing with respect to which I can make no sort of calculation, and against which I can make no provision. Even the longest continued series of proper actions, will form no habit that can be depended upon, and therefore after all my labour and anxiety, my object is quite precarious and uncertain.* p. 76. You have here, Sir, dressed up a character, agreeably to the sentiments of those, who maintain liberty, and the freedom of the will. And you say, that motives have *no necessary or certain influence* upon such a person. You mention many truths, to which your opponents will, I believe, readily subscribe. For what is extraordinary, that which you bring as an objection to their system, is a manifest demonstration of it's truth. You say, that a person, in this state of liberty, can never be certainly depended

depended on. You know not whether your praises or your rebukes will have any salutary effects. His future resolutions can never be absolutely known : *even the longest series of proper actions will form no habit, that can be depended upon.* In short your labour is quite precarious, as a father; and your views uncertain: for the son, upon whom these labours are expended, may possibly act in opposition to your best wishes. All this, Sir, is precisely true; and the real history of man. No one breathes, who is not in this uncertain state. There are many inducements to virtue; many motives to incline us to the truth; and though it is to be hoped, that they very often prevail: yet they have no certain, no necessary, influence upon our minds. There is nothing overbearing and irresistible: we are after all left to choose freely: and it is possible for us to make a bad option. In short we tread in slippery paths, and it would be presumptuous in the best man, that ever lived, to say, that he shall not fall. Hence it is, that we are counselled in the Holy Scriptures to know our imbecillity, and to call for Divine assistance, in order that our weaknesses may be remedied, and that we may be established in the way, in which we should go. O,

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hold up thou my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not. Psalm xvii. 5. St. Paul mentions, how necessary it was for him, even an Apostle, to be upon his guard, lest after all he should *be cast away*. The account therefore, which you have given of the state of liberty, is the genuine history of man. It is the same which is described to us in the Scriptures: the same likewise, which our daily experience affords us. It is also authenticated by the authority of various philosophers: and you intimate, that you are one of that denomination: whence it is wonderful, that this truth should have escaped you: As this is the real history of man, the system of liberty is confirmed by it; and you have undesignedly given your attestation to the truth.

But these consequences, which have been deduced from your words, are very different from your original intention. In the characters drawn of the two persons, your supposed sons, you endeavour to shew that the former, in a state of absolute necessity, is liable to proper influences; can be led by paternal advice; and conducted any way at pleasure: and this with a degree of certainty. But the other,
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in a state of freedom, is supposed in this place to be partially affected by motives: in other places to be liable to no * motives at all. Now all this is past my comprehension. I cannot conceive, how a person in a state of necessity, whose thoughts and actions have been for ages unalterably determined, can be led away by any new impulse, and directed with so much ease. And that the person in a state of liberty should be so limited, that advice should be either totally, or in a great degree, lost upon him. You say afterwards, that he can never be wholly a proper object of discipline, that is of teaching, exhorting, and advice, *till his self-determining power be entirely discharged*. Now as all advice must be submitted to his option; according to your opinion he can never choose, till he has lost the power of choice. In short, Sir, I should be sorry to give a false turn to your argument; but you seem to me to contend, that a person determined in his principles is the most ready to be persuaded, and that none are so inflexible, as those who are open to conviction. The very nature of things

* See p. 82. and p. 85. of a person acting wrong, and making a bad choice without any motive.

A mere will acting without any motive, p. 85.

appears

appears to my apprehension inverted. You deny freedom, where there is the greatest liberty: and admit it only under an absolute necessity.

There are many of your assumptions afterwards, for which I cannot account, and to which I know not how to accede. That which follows is of this nature. *We have supposed that A has done a virtuous action, and has been commended, because it proceeded from the bent of his mind to virtue, so that whenever proper circumstances occurred, he necessarily did what we wished him to have done. Let us now suppose, that B does the very same thing; but let it be fully understood, that the cause of his right determination was not any bias or disposition of mind in favour of virtue; or because a good motive influenced him to do it: but that his determination was produced by something within him (call it by what name you please) of a quite different nature, with respect to which motives of any kind have no sort of influence or effect, a mere arbitrary pleasure, without any reason whatever (for a reason is a motive) and I apprehend he would no more be thought a proper subject of praise, notwithstanding he should do what is right in itself, than the dice*

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which by a fortunate throw should give a man an estate. It is true the action was right, but there was not the proper principle and motive, which are the only just foundation of praise. p. 81. You say afterwards, at the conclusion of some other of your proofs, *If this be not a just, impartial, and philosophical state of this case, I do not know, what is so*—p. 86. This is spoken very emphatically, and I accordingly leave it at large for the world to consider; and to determine, as shall seem best. To me the whole appears to have been a very plain matter confounded: wherein right and wrong have changed places: and the one has been substituted for the other.

In another place, where you object to the scheme of liberty, you have the following words. *I will venture to say that let the case be stated with ever so much address, and refinement, it will be still found, that there cannot be any just foundation for praise, but upon a scheme, which supposes the mind to be so disposed, as that just views of things will necessarily determine the will to right action. The two schemes of liberty and necessity admit of no medium between them.* p. 84. There is nobody, I should think, but must allow, that a mind *well disposed*, upon which a
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just view of things properly operates, is entitled to praise. But how this can be consistent with your scheme, is not easy to be conceived. You indeed speak of a *just view of things*, which is *necessarily to determine the will*. But how is praise consistent with necessity? And how indeed can any present *view of things* at all affect the will, which is antecedently determined? If the mind has a propensity to any virtuous action, it was unavoidably impressed upon it, according to your principles. Whence then the claim to merit, and to praise?

SECTION VIII.

IN this you consider, How far man's general conduct will be influenced by the belief of the doctrine of necessity. *It is imagined, you say, by some, that the apprehension of all the actions of men depending upon motives, which necessarily influence their determinations, so that no action or event could possibly be otherwise, than it has been, is, or is to be, would make men indifferent in respect to their conduct, or to what befalls them in life. I answer so it would, if their own actions and determinations were not necessary links in this chain of causes and events: and if their*

good or bad success did not, in the strictest sense of the word, depend upon themselves, p. 96. We have here the same subject of debate brought over again : and the same detail of causes and effects renewed under the figure of a chain and its links. The misfortune, Sir, is, that in your answer to the difficulty proposed the question is begged here, as in other places ; and what wants most to be proved is taken for granted. Such is your arbitrary position, that persons under an absolute necessity, all whose thoughts and actions are decreed, must for their good and evil in life *in the strictest manner depend upon themselves*. What dependance can people have upon themselves, who are subjected to a prior and invincible obligation ; and whose thoughts and actions have been previously decreed ? You try afterwards to give some solution to this difficulty : and at last afford us an example by way of illustration. How satisfactory this may appear, can only be known from your own words, which I shall accordingly lay before the reader.—*All this may perhaps be more intelligible by example : I shall therefore endeavour to give one. No man entertains a doubt, but that every thing relating to vegetation is subject to the established laws of nature ;*

and

and supposing this to be the case, with respect to the human mind, and its operations, a being, of perfect intelligence and foresight, will know how we shall be provided for the next or any future year; so that in fact our provision for the next year, and all the events of it, are absolutely fixed, and nothing can interfere, to make it otherwise than it is to be. p. 111. Here for a moment I will stop short: as we are now come to the very point, which will serve for a criterion between the man of liberty and the rigid predestinarian. You, Sir, with those of your system, maintain, that as God foreknows every event to come, therefore all things are absolutely fixed, having of old been predetermined: and that nothing happens but by an absolute unalterable decree. Now the person, who proceeds upon the system of liberty and freewill, acknowledges, as you do, that all things are foreseen by the Deity: but his foresight and antecedent knowledge had no more influence upon the things in the womb of time, than our immediate knowledge and intuition have upon things present and before our eyes. Things would proceed, as they do, whether we saw them or not. This person thinks the doctrine of Necessity or Fate, contrary to experience; and inconsistent

with the gift of reason; notwithstanding all that has been said in its favour. But you will say with Mr. Hobbes: if we set aside absolute decrees, and necessity, we destroy *the prescience* of the Deity: *For whatever God foresees shall come to pass; a man, if he has liberty, might frustrate.* I answer, not in the least. This notion arises from our presumption in circumscribing God's power, and not knowing the extent of Omniscience. You boldly confine this great attribute, and limit it to cause and effect: and if it has not its origin from those means, you rashly insist, that God cannot have any foreknowledge. But on my part, though I am sensible, that it exists, yet I do not presume to determine in what manner: nor do I make its reality depend upon the powers of the human mind, nor the depth of my own knowledge. I am well assured, that it exists in a most absolute manner, and can never be made void. Indeed the very notion of God's foreknowledge being frustrated is a contradiction: an absolute inconsistency. As man is gifted with freedom in his thoughts and actions; he may hesitate, he may doubt, and delay the execution of his purposes. But after all there is an ultimate, to which he must come: he must one way or

other determine : and that ultimate and determination was certainly foreseen by the Deity : You may yourself fluctuate and be uncertain ; but this uncertainty was foreseen by God ; and though you may not know your own resolution, yet it was known to him. In short—*Verte omnes tete in facies, et contrahe quicquid, sine animis, sine arte vales* : be designedly indeterminate, yet it will amount to nothing : your last resolves are assuredly known, and were so from the beginning. You say, that this must proceed from a series of causes and effects : and if it does not originate from them, that it cannot exist at all. You appear to me much too rash and confident in limiting Omnipotence ; and determining the ways of the Most High. By many pious and learned men the foreknowledge of the Deity has been thought to consist in a vast comprehensive power of the Divine mind : in a wonderful and boundless intuition ; through which all things, past, present, and to come, have been intimately and immediately known from the beginning. But you fondly think, that if man is gifted with freedom of thought and action, that he can disappoint the Almighty, and render his foreknowledge abortive. What an absurd surmise

is this? No real foreknowledge can be made void: therefore do not call things by wrong names: For be assured, that the prescience of the Deity cannot be either controlled; or rendered ineffectual. It would not be foreknowledge, were such a thing possible. *His ways are higher than our ways; and his thoughts, than our thoughts.* His understanding cannot be fathomed by mortals. In short let us act or think as we please, still we must come to a conclusion: and the whole was ever open to Him from whom nothing is hid; both the determination, at whatever time it may be brought about, and the secret workings by which it was effected.

But I may be wrong in deferring so long the example, by which you purposed to illustrate your scheme. You had intimated that there was an analogy between the human mind, and vegetation: and that they were both subject *to the same laws of nature.* p. 98. And in respect to the former the produce of each year was determined of old; and *nothing can interfere to make it otherwise than it is to be.* But, say you, *will any Farmer, believing this ever so firmly, neglect on this account to sow his fields and content himself*

himself with saying, God knows how I shall be provided for the next year? I cannot change his decree, and let his will be done. We see in fact, that such a persuasion never operates in this manner: because though the chain of events is necessary, our own determinations and actions are necessary links of that chain. This gives the Farmer the fullest assurance, that if it be decreed for him to starve, it is likewise decreed for him to neglect to sow his fields; but if he do sow his fields, which depends entirely upon himself, that then, since the laws of nature are invARIABLE, it will be evident, that no such unfavourable decree had gone forth. p. 99.

This in truth, Sir, is a very elaborate illustration: which I am sorry to say, after all your trouble, I am not able to comprehend. I cannot conceive, how it should come to pass, that, if a Farmer starves, it is by an absolute decree: if he grows rich and in good plight, *it depends entirely upon himself*: You seem in the latter case to give up the necessity for which you have been contending: and to admit the liberty, which you before denied. In respect to the Farmer's soliloquy I see nothing so improper in it upon your principles: were they in reality in full force. But I am confident, that though a person may be

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a Predestinarian in theory ; he will never be so in practice. You say well of the countrymen's persuasion, that *it never operates in this manner*. You are undoubtedly in the right. We may be assured, that the honest rustic had never any conception of this nature. When he was to plough and to sow, he never in the least thought of a long chain of necessary events : nor that his own *determinations and actions were necessary links of that chain*. Whatever decrees you may frame for him, he is of a firm opinion, that his sowing and his reaping *depend entirely upon himself* : and he acts in conformity to this persuasion. He knows so much of the *invariable laws of nature* that corn will not grow of itself : and that without culture he shall have nothing but dock and darnel. In short, as I have before said, I believe you will never find a thorough-paced practical Predestinarian.

SECTION IX.

THE purport of this Section is the Moral Influence of the Doctrine of Necessity : and the happy consequences, which result from it. It is said, that mankind in general cannot
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arrive at the great truths, which are contained in this system. *They have, we are told, no apprehension of the real and unavoidable consequences of the principles, they every day act upon. They would even be alarmed, and staggered, if those consequences were pointed out to them.* p. 104. *When they are told, that in consequence of these concessions, they must admit, that nothing could have been otherwise than it has been; that every thing comes to pass in consequence of an established constitution of things, &c.—that God is to be considered as the proper and sole cause of all things, good and evil, natural and moral, they are staggered, and withhold their assent.*

From this place, therefore, the Philosopher must be content to proceed by himself. But we shall see, that his more comprehensive views of the system of nature are not less, but much more favourable to his improvement in virtue and happiness, than the more limited views of the bulk of mankind.—
p. 105.

But previous to this I would observe, that the practical use of these philosophical views is confined to a man's cooler moments, when the mind is not under the influence of any violent emotion or passion.

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For since the mind of a Philosopher is formed, and the associations, by which it is influenced, are fixed exactly like those of other men, he will not be able in the general tumult and hurry of life, to feel, think, or act, in a manner different from other men. A provocation will fix his resentment—and a grateful or kind action will, in like manner, direct his love—&c. p. 106.—We are now therefore to consider what are the feelings of the Philosopher retired from the world, under the influence of no violent emotion, and therefore contemplating nothing very recent. p. 106.—Now in my opinion, his philosophical views will give an elevation and force to his piety, and to virtue in all its branches, that could have been acquired any other way. And this may be perceived in those persons, whose general views of things have approached the nearest to those, that are truly philosophical.—The spirit of devotion in general must be greatly promoted—It will not be possible to bear ill will to any of our brethren:—In short this one leading principle of devotion cannot fail to regulate the whole temper and conduct. p. 108. 109. No other than a Necessarian can possibly attain to the full persuasion of this great and invaluable truth.—With such sublime views of the system and the author of it, as these, vice is absolutely incompatible: and more especially, hatred,

hatred, envy, and malice, are totally excluded. I cannot as a Neccessarian hate any man. p. 111.—If as a Neccessarian, I cease to blame men for their vices in the ultimate sense of the word; though in the common and proper sense of it I continue to do so, &c.—I on my system cannot help viewing them with a tendernefs, and compassion, that will have an infinitely finer and happier effect, &c. p. 112.

You have, Sir, placed your system in so fair a light, and so affectingly described its happy consequences, that I am nearly induced to adopt in some degree the words of Agrippa to Paul, and say—*Almost thou persuadest me to be a Neccessarian.* The love, the charity, and the universal benevolence, which you hold forth, would, one would think, be inducements to any person of a rational turn of mind, and engage him to your party. And I do not see any thing to impede my immediate conversion, but one or two scruples, which I know not how to overcome. You intimate, good Sir, in more places than one, that you are a philosopher: and you have good reason to take that title to yourself. Your deep researches, in nature, and your experimental knowledge, are well known: and your discoveries have been esteemed of great consequence: on which

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account the world looks up to you very justly with high esteem and honour. Scarcely any in this department can rank before you. And in respect to the present system, which you have been presenting to us, you intimate, that you have arrived at an insight in these matters, to which none but a Philosopher can attain. You may therefore be looked upon as the chief pillar of your cause: and if the virtues above mentioned do naturally arise from your system, we may suppose them to be eminently in you. But herein I think, that I perceive some little failure. If anger and resentment are incompatible with necessity: if, when devoted to that system you *cannot hate a man*; and are really gifted with that *infinitely refined tenderness and compassion* for others, which you have mentioned; how comes it, that there is not a greater shew of it? For you are sensible, that *the tree is known by its fruits*. In short how comes it, that you sometimes forget your necessarian charity, and so cruelly fall foul of Dr. Beattie? And not only of Dr. Beattie and his *instinctive common sense*, but of some others, who differ from you in opinion; and whom you treat with not a little roughness. Perhaps, as a Necessarian you do not abuse them for
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their failings *in the ultimate sense of the word*, but *in the common sense of it* : which may afford them some consolation, if they understand your meaning. In short, if those salutary effects, which you mention, were the real consequences of the doctrines, which you have embraced and recommend, they would be particularly conspicuous in yourself, as you are more eminent than any of your brethren. But, believe me, I do not perceive any more candour, benevolence, and charity, from your words, than is to be found among other people : which makes me doubt much of the supposed excellency of your system. Nor is it only from you, that we have a right to expect these marks of superiority, but from all those, who in any degree adhere to the doctrines of Necessity and Predestination. If these Christian virtues are the particular result of those opinions, as you say ; they must be very conspicuous among the persons, who have embraced them. Now these we know to be chiefly the Calvinists ; a portion of people, of whose community you once were ; and consequently must be well acquainted with their tenets, as well as their manners. They are many of them rigid Predestinarians, and should

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on that account, surpass all other people in meekness, charity, and virtue in general. But we have your evidence, that it is not so. You speak in p. 161. of *the Calvinistic scheme, as a gloomy one*: and you say,—*where a disposition to vice has preoccupied the mind, I am well satisfied, and but too many facts might be alledged to prove it, that the doctrines of Calvinism have been actually fatal to the remains of virtue: and have driven men into the most desperate and abandoned course of wickedness.* p. 162. You likewise confess, p. 164. that though there be undoubtedly among them men, whose hearts and lives are *truly Christian*, yet there is often found in others of this persuasion—*great malignity of heart, concealed under all the external forms of devotion.* I must confess on my part, that I never was witness to any such malignity: but we have your word for it; and will therefore acquiesce in what you affirm. You likewise mention some cruel treatment, which you have experienced from the Calvinists; and that you was *exasperated* against them. p. 164. But if your system, as you say, is superiour to all others; and is productive of nothing but peace, charity, and benevolence; attended with all the gentle affections of tenderness and compassion; whence
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proceeds such malignity and ill-will, with all this bitterness of gall? How come the elect, whom we should have thought exempt from these infernal qualities, to abound with them more than others? I by no means affirm that they do : but I only argue from what you have said of them, as well as of yourself. For I am unwilling to think so ill of a community, which has produced some excellent men ; particularly a Leland and Foster.

Moreover as the Calvinists are supposed to have a large portion of the divine influence, and to feel intimately the grace of God operating within them, one must necessarily be led to expect, that they would enjoy a particular gleam of comfort ; a heavenly serenity, in consequence of this blessing. The divine truths also should be more open to them than to others ; and their principles, one would think, should be the best founded. Yet, though they are as much Necessarians as yourself, you disapprove of their principles, and seem to intimate from them, that the Calvinists are under an illusion.

Upon the whole however, the acquaintance I have had with Calvinists convinces me, that their principles, in the minds of calm sober-thinking persons, will always leave some room for doubt and uncertainty

with respect to the evidence of their conversion; and what is called the work of grace in the heart, in which much must necessarily be left to the imagination; and therefore that at times a gloom will be spread over the soul.—Unless this effect be counteracted, their principles do not admit of that perfect serenity and cheerfulness, with which it is to be wished that a life of real piety and virtue might ever be attended. p. 165. At this rate I do not see any the least advantage, that a Necessarian has in proof of his orthodoxy: There is nothing, that can persuade us of the superiour excellence of his system. He is described, as in a state of uncertainty, if not of infatuation: and his principles are said to lead to gloom and melancholy; and, if we may trust to what has been said before, to absolute despair. These things, if true, do not seem to be the fruits of the Spirit: nor can they recommend the system, in which they are found.

You may perhaps say, that your notions about necessity are very different from those of the Calvinists. They may be so: but it is a point, in which I am not concerned. In reality I believe, it will be found a distinction without a difference. There may be some
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things, in which you fancy that you do not agree with them : but your first principles are the same. You both believe in absolute decrees, and unavoidable destiny : and the same consequences must follow, however on your part you may try to evade them.

SECTION X.

WE are here informed, *In what sense God may be considered as the author of sin : and of the objection to the doctrine of necessity on that account.* You are pleased to tell us more than once, that when people have considered the consequences which naturally result from your principles, they are *staggered* and *frightened* : and have not the courage to proceed. Believe me, good Sir, I do not wonder at it : for the path seems to lead to a precipice, and every step is over burning embers. There are few of such courage as not to be appalled, when they hear the God of all goodness made the author of all evil. You indeed put your question, *In what sense God may be so considered* : but there is only an alternative, that he either is, or is not : and however you may soften things at setting out, you at last determine,

that he is so in every sense, *by making him the proper cause of all evil.* p. 125. In this place you go so far as to say, that as all evils are subservient to greater good,—*every thing without distinction may be safely ascribed to God.* p. 115. Surely, Sir, this is as rash as it is shocking; How can a person of the least reverence towards his Creator, suppose that the God of all goodness and justice, as well as of all purity and holiness, should have decreed, theft, murder, parricide, and every species of cruelty? that he should have ordained and appointed pollution, filth, incest, and every unnatural desire; directed every evil affection of the mind; and with a high hand carried every crime into execution? Do not, Sir, think it want of fortitude in me, if I tremble at the bare recital: for it is past expression shocking to conceive the horrid consequences, which necessarily follow from your principles. You give a reason for what you so boldly assert: that *whatever terminates in good, philosophically speaking, is good.* This, Sir, is an aphorism as false as it is dangerous. It was an article of the Jesuits creed: by which they thought they were authorized to wade through a sea of blood in order to arrive at a remote advantage. As for your qualify-

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ing it by the terms *philosophically speaking*: I know not the meaning of the limitation. You afterwards confess, that the whole is a mere theory; and not to be reduced to practice: which is very strange. *But this is a view of moral evil, which though innocent, and even useful in speculation, no wise man can, or would choose to act upon himself, because our understandings are too limited for the application of such a means of good: though a Being of infinite knowledge may introduce it with the greatest advantage—While our natures are, what they are,—we must shun vice as any other evil, and indeed the greatest of all evils, and choose virtue as the greatest good.* p. 115. But have you not, Sir, said, that God is the author of evil: that it proceeds from his original decrees: what room then is there for man either to choose or to shun? In truth I try, but am at a loss, to find your meaning. I am overpowered by words and bewildered. I am obliged again and again to recur to what you have said: that *the two schemes of liberty and necessity admit of no medium.* p. 84. That all things have been *decreed*: and that our will is under the direction of an *absolute and foreign power.* p. 8. You here seem to forget these things: and to allow to man a

free will, by giving him a power of choosing and rejecting. For these concessions, as I have repeatedly said, I know not how to account. You proceed to illustrate your system : and to palliate, what you have asserted, by telling us, *that supposing God to be the author of sin, it by no means implies, that he is a sinful being.—If his disposition and design be good, what he does is morally good.* This, I imagine, will hardly be granted : that lust, murder, incest, parricide, can at any rate be morally good ; whatever may be the consequences. However you try to illustrate and prove your tenets by example, *It was wicked, you say, in Joseph's brethren to sell him into Egypt : because they acted from envy, hatred, and covetousness : but it was not wicked in God, because in appointing it, he was not actuated by any such principle. In him it was gracious and good, &c.* p. 117. This is surely a weak argument. How would a Voltaire, a Diderot, and even your friend Hume, smile at these feeble expedients ; by which you try to free your self from the difficulties, into which you have been rashly involved ? You tell us, that it was wicked in Joseph's brethren to behave as they did, *because they acted from envy, hatred, and covetousness.* But was not this hatred,

tred, and this envy, *decreed*? Do not you say, that all things, good and evil, may be ascribed to the Deity. p. 115. Do not you in so many words, p. 127. l. 24. make God *the cause of all evil*? How then were the persons concerned in the sale of their brother accountable for their passions, any more than for the consequences, which ensued from them. They were according to your principles under an absolute necessity; and acted in obedience to an irresistible power. Why then do you stile them wicked? You yourself have been trying through 100 pages to prove that all things proceed from the Deity. A Voltaire would therefore ask, How comes it, Sir, if the purpose and end be good, that the means are not equally excellent: for though you may allot in this place only the good purpose to God, and the evil to Joseph's brethren, yet in other places you ascribe to him the whole: you insist that all things are ordained by his counsels: and as you admit him to be the author of all good; so (shocking to conceive!) you make him the contriver of all evil. Therefore upon your system, the good and the evil must descend from the same fountain.

You tell us, that *Mr. Hume, who in general discusses the question concerning liberty and necessity with great clearness, intirely abandons the doctrine of necessity to the most immoral and shocking consequences.*—He says (*Philosoph. Essays*, p. 157.) that upon the scheme of necessity, *human actions can either have no turpitude at all, as proceeding from so good a cause, as the Deity: or if they have any moral turpitude, they must involve our Creator in the same guilt.* p. 119. A fearful alternative truly: and, whatever you may think, not to be solved upon the principles of necessity. You accuse Mr. Hume in this case: but he acts consistently: you yourself have said the same thing in other words; and then try to soften the harshness of the doctrine, but to little purpose. These fatal consequences follow naturally and must be admitted upon your system. You ask indeed, *Did not this writer know, what is known to all the world, that the motive or intention, with which a thing is done, is the circumstance, that principally constitutes it's morality?* With what contempt would Mr. Hume treat this palliating circumstance? He would in his turn ask, *whether it were possible, when the Deity decreed evil, that he should never intend it?* Yes, you will say, *he did indeed intend it,*
but

but it was with a purpose to bring forth good. But it will be said,—*If the whole comes from God, why could not an All-powerful Being produce the good without the evil?* And that which was asked before may be again required—*If the purpose was good, why were not the means equally excellent?* You say, the disposition is that, which constitutes morality. But in reality good and evil, virtue and vice, are irreconcilably different: and no purpose, nor disposition, can make them other, than they are. You have, Sir, brought yourself into difficulties, from which you cannot with all your art and subtilty disengage yourself. Mr. Hume was a man of a dark turn: devoted to doubt and uncertainty. If we may not say, that he did not believe in a Providence, yet it cannot be affirmed that he did. He seems to have been, if I may be allowed the expression, an *undetermined Atheist*. All therefore, that he has said upon this occasion, is consistent with his principles. But you, Sir, who own, that you believe in a Deity, are guilty of great inconsistency: from which you cannot free yourself. Every fatal consequence, which Mr. Hume deduces from the doctrine of necessity, follows in the same manner from your system. But you
try

try to extenuate what you say; being unwilling to fright people with the fatal tendency of these principles. You seem yourself to start back, as if in some degree shocked: and in good truth, you have reason. In consequence of this you would fain alter the essence of vice, and impiety. By the help of a talismanic word, *Disposition*; crimes change their nature: Theft, robbery, murder, ebriety, lust, envy, revenge, become innocent: Sin and guilt are by you reconciled with *justice*: and the most foul and deformed vices with the *Beauty of Holiness*. You believe, Sir, in the scriptures; and you must surely remember, how very expresses the Prophet is upon this head. *Woe unto them, that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness: that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.* Isaiah c. 5. v. 20.

You endeavour to excuse the introduction of moral evil into the world, which you suppose to be the work of the Deity, by saying, *That the Divine Being may adopt some things, which he would not have chosen on their own account: but for the sake of other things, with which they were connected.* p. 124. But in this
you

you greatly lessen the majesty of the Deity, and bring down the Creator to a level with his creatures : attributing to him the same impotence in his counsels ; and laying him under the same necessity and restraint. And to excuse it still farther, you maintain, that according to the fundamental laws of nature morality could not exist *without* * *vice*. p. 125. They are to be sure in human life contrasted as much as light and darkness. But to aver, that the one depends upon the other, and cannot subsist without it, is a most unwarrantable assertion. You may as well say, that there could not be sunshine without shade : whereas the sun would be in full lustre, though there were not a single opaque body within the sphere of his rays. At this rate the kingdom of righteousness, promised by our Saviour, can never come, in the manner we expect it : for upon your principles there must be a proper share of *folly* and *wickedness* in the other world to constitute such a

* According to the most fundamental laws of Nature, and indeed the nature of things, great virtues in some could not be generated, nor exist, but in conjunction with great vices in others. For it is this opposition, that not only exhibits them to advantage, but even properly speaking creates them.

kingdom.

kingdom. But be assured, that things are very different from what you imagine. A kingdom will undoubtedly be established, where there will be purity without spot, and holiness without foil or blemish. And the same might have been in this, were it not for the perverseness of man ; and his abuse of the liberty, with which he was from the beginning endowed. You insist the whole tribe of virtues are created by their opposite failings. That without a proportional quantity of moral evil ; there could be *no fortitude, no elevation of soul, nor resignation to the will of God.* p. 125. But this is a great mistake. The envy, hatred, and malice of the world may call forth these happy qualities ; and render them conspicuous : but the moral excellence, from whence they proceed, the original parent virtue, would exist, though they were not displayed. We may imagine a rich treasure to be in a coffer, though there may not be any demand for it's being immediately produced ; and as I said before, a light may shine though there be no contrast. Suppose the world were universally good. Would it not be a strange aphorism to maintain, *that virtue would cease to be virtue, when it came to be uniformly practised : and that,*
if

if love, duty, and allegiance, were punctually kept up, we should be void of all morality? Nothing, I should think, could be more unwarrantable: and yet these are the natural consequences of the principles, which you have laid down.

When among other objects of creation it pleased God to make man; He formed him in his own image: and endowed him with a reasonable soul. And he placed before him good and evil, that he might have opportunities of exercising the noble faculty, with which he was blessed; and thereby shew a proper sense of duty to the hand, which had formed him. When man was thus gifted with reason, there seems to have been this alternative only, in respect to his future conduct: either he was to have liberty to employ the powers bestowed upon him; to separate, distinguish, and make his option accordingly: or he was to be under the absolute influence of a superior power; and to be directed in all his ways. If then we may take the liberty to judge from the small light afforded us concerning the operations of the Most High, which may we presume to think most consonant to Divine wisdom? whether to grant man the liberty of reasoning, and employing

ploying the faculties, with which he was invested: or to overrule his will by a foreign influence: and though he retained the gift, yet to abridge him of the use of it? You, Sir, seem to acknowledge, that this must have been the alternative; by saying, that there can be no *medium* between necessity and freedom. And in consequence of it, I hope, it will not be presumptuous to suppose, that as it has pleased God to bestow the gift of reason, it was his intention to indulge man in the use of it, and not to counteract his own purposes. For a power of reasoning without the liberty to reason were a vain gift. From hence we may be able to answer the question of old about evil; which has been with some triumph repeated by Mr. Hume. **Why is there any misery at all in the world? Not by chance surely. From some cause then. Is it from the intention of the Deity? But he is perfectly benevolent. Is it contrary to his intention? But he is Almighty. Nothing can shake the solidity of this reasoning, so short, so clear, and so decisive: except we assert, that these subjects exceed all human capacity.* The question, which he puts partially about pain and misery, has been often asked about evil in general: and

* Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, p. 194.

he afterwards refers to it himself, insisting, that it is inexplicable. *If we preserve human analogy, we must ever find it impossible to reconcile any mixture of evil in the universe with infinite attributes.* p. 198. He may after all be too self-sufficient; especially as he thinks the subject may possibly exceed human capacity. What we cannot obtain by our own natural light, may be in some degree afforded by revelation. In consequence of which permit me to ask some questions. Is it inconsistent with the wisdom of the Creator to produce different degrees of subordinate beings: and instead of one species enrich the world with many? I trust, that no body can except to this procedure: nor think it an impeachment either of his wisdom or his justice. Is there in the next place any impropriety, among other objects of creation, to produce man: and to endow him with reason, that he may distinguish between good and evil? Surely nobody can have the presumption or the ingratitude to arraign the Deity on this head. Who can repine at his being made a rational creature rather than a brute beast; or being reduced to a stock or a stone? But if the Deity enriched man with the faculty of reason, to distinguish and to choose; can we suppose that
 he

he would overrule that power by an absolute necessity ; and not suffer man, to whom it is given, to employ it after the manner intended ? Would it not appear strange, that a gift should be bestowed, and the liberty of exercising it be taken away ? That a man should be blessed with the means of conducting himself, and yet be ever under the direction of another ? Is it possible to conceive, that the Deity should run counter to his own purposes ; and make his best gifts unnecessary and useless ? For there is no occasion for reason to distinguish, if we are never allowed the liberty of determination. Does it not seem vain to give a power of choosing, and at the same time to abridge us of all choice ? To allow us a will, but take away the power of volition : which, according to you, Sir, is ever to be directed by a foreign influence : an influence not arising from our own judgment : but from an absolute decree, an irresistible motive, which takes away all mental determination ?

As far as we can learn from the scriptures we may be assured, that man from the beginning was blessed with the high prerogative of reason ; and at the same time with full liberty

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to use it. If any evil has arisen from the abuse of this noble gift, it is in my opinion blasphemy to place it to the account of the all-just God; as it proceeds immediately from man. How can we suppose him, who is said to be of purer eyes than even to *behold iniquity*, to be the author of all wickedness? Yet you say that he permits evil: that is, he permits man to act in conformity to the station, in which he is placed; and to the powers allotted him. Whatever is created, if not equal to the Creator, must be infinitely short of his excellence. But what creature can be supposed to be equal to the omnipotent and all-wise God? Whatever then is created must be comparatively imperfect: and from imperfection evil will necessarily arise. There is a natural imbecillity, to which every thing is liable. Why do you not arraign divine wisdom, as well as divine justice, for suffering the grass to wither, the flower to fade, and the tree to die? Why do you not adjudge it a defect and impropriety in the process of creation, that the oyster should want locomotivity; that the tortoise should be ever burthened with its house; that the eagle cannot swim, nor the shark run, nor the mule fly? Why is not your pride aggrieved that every

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thing created is not at once immortal? Man like all other animals is limited: and this, both in respect to the powers of his body and the faculties of the mind. Though nobly endowed, yet he is neither omnipotent nor omniscient: but infinitely below any such extraordinary pretensions. He is therefore liable to err; and, through the imbecillity of his mind, to misapply the talents with which he is gifted. He is enriched with reason; and it is his duty to consider, to distinguish; and to judge without prejudice. His powers were given for this purpose; and if he falls off, and abuses these powers, it is his own fault, and to be imputed to him solely. But you repeatedly ask, Has not the Deity a superior power: and cannot he prevent this abuse? That is, as God has been pleased to bestow upon man the faculty of reason, in order that he may judge between right and wrong; and determine accordingly; cannot he overrule this power, counteract his own purposes, and render the gift useless? In respect to power he undoubtedly can: but every thing, which can be done, may not be consistent with divine wisdom. It seems, as far as man can judge, indispensably necessary, that every thing in its department,

should

should fulfil the purpose, for which it was designed : and if man is gifted with a power of judging and determining, that he should judge for himself, whatever may be the consequence, and not be always determined by a foreign influence. You, Sir, insist, that to permit evil is as bad as to cause it. But give me leave to state our two opinions and see if things can possibly be, as you assert : for, as far as I can judge, the whole of your argument and system, seems to lead to a great impiety. According to my best judgment all moral evil originates in man, from an abuse of his reason, and of the liberty given him both to judge and to determine. All this was foreseen by the Deity ; and in respect to power could have been prevented. But then man could not have been man : his liberty of judging and acting must have been overruled : and a rational being must not have been permitted to reason ; which is the same thing as if the gift had never been granted. Man therefore was left to make use of his faculties, and to enjoy that liberty, with which he had been endowed : and if he has misemployed his talents, and any evil has resulted from the liberty bestowed upon him, that evil must be imputed to him only. The

Deity permits it; as it cannot be totally restrained in man, without defeating the very purpose of his creation. It can be remedied, and will be remedied by him, who out of evil brings forth good, and can reinstate the fallen creature. All this will be in the fullness of time accomplished; when his gracious purposes will effectually take place.

If then we presume to object to the evil, which originates in man: we must retract our assent to the propriety both of his being created, and of his being endowed, as we find him to be. We must insist, that he should have been otherwise framed and gifted: for as he is, these consequences must necessarily follow. To be sure the sceptic may so insist: but then man would no longer be man; the supposition refers to another creature: and the argument is as absurd, as it is impious. Mr. Hume in his enquiry about evil asks, *whether it is from the intention of the Deity?* and adds, *but he is perfectly benevolent. Is it contrary to his intention? but he is Almighty. Nothing can shake the solidity of this reasoning.* Yet the whole of this formidable question amounts only to this, *whether the all-*

* Discourses concerning Nat. Relig. p. 194.

*perfect God can produce any thing imperfect? in other words, whether he must necessarily produce all things equal to himself? But the question is as absurd, as the thing itself is*impossible: for perfection is to be found in him only: and all created things must fall infinitely short of his excellence. They may be said to be so far perfect, as that they answer to the wise purposes, for which they were designed. Thus as an insect is fitted to it's proper sphere: so is man adapted to the department which he is to fill. The whole is done with great justice and propriety: and whatever may be the consequences, we cannot without the utmost impiety arraign the disposition.*

Above, Sir, you have my opinion, that the moral evil, with which we are conversant, originates in man; and that the Deity suffers it: as it is the necessary consequence of the liberty, with which we are gifted. You say, that to suffer it, *is the same as willing and directly causing*

* Dr. Priestly has this concession: from which, I think, he might have made many proper inferences,—*That God might have made all men sinless and happy, might, for any thing that we know, have been as impossible, as his making them not finite, but infinite beings, in all respects equal to himself.* p. 118.

it. p. 126. and you go farther and maintain; that all evil proceeds from the Deity: he decreed and ordained it from the beginning. The necessary inferences from hence are shocking beyond conception. According to your system every foul and polluted thought must proceed from the God of all purity. All perfidy and falshood was decreed by the God of justice and truth. In short there is no instance of wickedness, but must have been (horrid to imagination) of his contrivance, and enforced by his * commands: and these commands attended with an absolute necessity; which nothing can resist. At the same time we are told, if any faith may be placed in the holy scriptures, that God detests vice, and that sin is his abomination. The whole tendency of the sacred writings is to recommend virtue; and to discountenance wickedness. *The Lord, says the Psalmist, will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.* v. 6. *Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.* Prov. xii. 22. *Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips, that they speak no guile.* Psalm xxxiv. 13.

* As the same arguments are renewed continually, I am obliged both here and in other places to repeat my answers. This may appear in some degree tiresome: but it could not well be avoided,

Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live. Amos v. 14. *Follow not that, which is evil: but that, which is good.* 3 John. ver. 11. Exhortations of this sort are in great number: and these are also backed with positive laws, in order to keep people in a state of virtue and godliness. And when a better dispensation took place, the will of the all-righteous God was more fully made known; and the reasonable service, the sacrifice of the will, enjoined: and not only outward sanctity, but the inward purity of the mind recommended and enforced. But to what purpose were these different dispensations, if there were prior decrees of a contrary tendency, by which mankind was irresistibly tied down? And how inconsistent must it appear, and even impossible for the same benevolent God, who enjoins holiness, to be, as you would persuade us, the author of all evil! And what a paradox it is to have those salutary lessons for our conduct administered, if after all we are under a prior influence and deprived of all choice! You may say, that you have in so many words allowed men the liberty of choosing. You have so in one page: and, as I have before observed, you have laboured to make it void in every other part of your

treatise. And you have unluckily taken away all opportunity of any subterfuge, by asserting, that between liberty and necessity *there is no medium*. You therefore set aside all liberty, and reduce men to an absolute and unavoidable necessity. And this necessity according to your system is derived from the Deity: who by his unalterable decrees has ordained every thing which is bad and corrupt: every species of abomination and sin. This you insist on, though you are told by the Prophet and Evangelists, that he is a God of righteousness and holiness: that he is also eminently good; so that *there is none good but one, that is God*. Matt. xix. 17. The same Deity from whom you suppose all discord and violence to have proceeded, is called *the God of love and peace*. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. and the very *God of peace*. Heb. xiii. 20. We may therefore be assured, that none of these horrid qualities could be derived from him. *God is light, and in him is no darkness*. 1 John i. 5. These things, Sir, I have thought proper to lay before you: that you may judge, whether the *sufferance* of evil be as bad as *causing* it: and whether a permit be the same as a performance. I shall add no more, but only conclude with the words of the

Apostle,

Apostle, *Let God be true, and every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings; and mightest overcome, when thou art judged.* Romans iii. 4.

SECTION XI.

HAVING hitherto prosecuted your system in theory, you try at last to confirm it by divine authority; and accordingly you attempt to shew us—*How far the Scriptures are favourable to the doctrine of Necessity.* p. 129. Should there possibly be found one or two texts, which might seem to favour your notion; yet they would amount to little, when opposed to the whole tenour of the sacred writings; which contain a very different doctrine. So far from being determined from the beginning by any foreign influence, we are commanded to make use of our reason, and to look up to God for his assistance and direction. And if we will not make a good use of the faculties bestowed upon us; nor seek that heavenly influence, by which we may be led to the truth; we are given up to our own depraved will, and the iniquity of our hearts. All this plainly proves, when good and evil are laid

laid before us, that we are at full liberty to choose the one and to eschew the other: nor can we have been under any previous necessity; nor have had our purposes determined beforehand by any absolute decrees: for then we should be past amendment; and all change impossible: whereas we pray for a renewal of spirit, and for the grace of God to effect it; which grace is a subsequent gift; and depends upon our wishes and prayers. Supplications, and pious wishes, of this kind are enjoined to all: but they would be unnecessary and preposterous, if every thing antecedently were determined concerning us. The freewill-offering; so acceptable to the Deity, is rendered void by the supposing of any prior and irresistible restraint upon the mind and understanding. At the same time we well know, and acknowledge, that God does not leave the world to itself: but continually interferes with a paternal care; and occasionally directs, enforces, alters, and restrains, as seemeth best, to his Divine Wisdom. His Providence is over all his works; and by this superintendence the whole is ultimately carried on, to the completion of those great purposes, for which it was intended. You, Sir, insist, upon previous absolute decrees: and
that

that the world is directed by an uncontrolled necessity : In consequence of which you quote many passages from the sacred writings, as if they confirmed those doctrines. But they manifestly relate to the Providence of God : and to the subsequent blessings of Grace to those, who try by just means to obtain them. Also to the judicial blindness and infatuation, which is threatened to the rebellious ; and to all, who wilfully misapply the gifts, with which they have been favoured. *For to every one, that hath, shall be given ; and he shall have abundance : but from him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he hath.* Matt. xxv. 29. But let us see the quotations, of which you are pleased to avail yourself : that we may judge how far they are serviceable to your system.

Deut. xxx. 6. *And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.*

Jerem. xxiv. 7. *And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord : and they shall be my people, and I will be their God ; and they shall turn unto me with their whole heart.*

Jerem.

Jerem. xxxii. 39. *And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them. I will put my fear in their heart, and they shall not depart from me.*

Ezek. xi. 19. *And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of your flesh.*

Ezek. xxxvi. 26. *And I will put my spirit in you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my statutes and do them.*

It is said of Lydia (Acts xvi. 14.) whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul.

With respect to the reception of the Gospel, our Saviour says (John vi. 37. &c.) All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me. No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him. And again,—No man can come unto me, except it be given to him of the Father.

To the same purpose the Apostle St. Paul says (1. Cor. iii. 6. &c.) I have planted and Apollos watered,

watered, but God gave the increase: so that neither is he, that planted, any thing; neither he, that watered, but God that gave the increase. He also says (Phil. i. 6.) *Being confident of this one thing, that he, who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.* ii. 12. 13. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God, that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his own pleasure.* We find the same sentiment in Jude, ver. 24. *Now unto him, that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the coming of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, and our Saviour, be glory and majesty, &c.* To these you add the following observations, viz. *All prayers for good dispositions go upon the same principles, and these are frequent in the Scriptures.* Thus Solomon, at the solemn dedication of the temple, prays in the following manner (1 Chron. xxix. 18.) *O Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob, keep this for ever in imagination of the thoughts of the hearts of thy people, and prepare their hearts unto thee.* David says, (Ps. li. 10.) *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me.* The Apostle Paul prays to the same purpose. (Rom. xv. 13.) *Now the God of hope fill you with all hope and*
joy.

joy in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Ephes. iii. 16. That he may grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you being rooted and grounded in love, &c. 1 Theff. v. 23. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly. Heb. xii. 20. Now the God of all peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will: working in you, that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ. Such are the texts of Scripture, which you have brought in support of your system: but all, that can be learned from them, is, that God superintends all things, like a wise governour: and, as we are through the imbecillity of our nature incapable of acting up to the dignity of our calling, that he is ever graciously ready to assist those, that call upon him, with his saving grace: and that if we will but exert ourselves, and try to merit his assistance, what we cannot of ourselves perform shall be compleated in us by the influence of his Holy Spirit. All this is promised upon certain terms: and all that was promised to the children of Israel through Moses was conditional; in consequence

quence of a covenant established, and of their faithfully performing their part. But in these promises, and in these communications of divine favour, there is not the least hint of any absolute necessity; nor eternal decrees: There is no law of nature nor irresistible influence mentioned as operating from the beginning of time: but quite the contrary. An influence is promised; but conditional. It is subsequent to the promise made; and liable to be forfeited; if those, to whom it is tendered, do not labour to deserve it. And these persons, so far from being fixed in their principles, and determined by any foreign power, are left to their free option, to accept, or to refuse, the overtures made unto them. And as God in the abundance of his mercy and goodness promised to further all those who looked up to him, and used their best endeavours to please him; so he threatened all those, who were disobedient and apostates, with the loss of his favour, and the withholding of his Holy Spirit. And he farther assured all such, that he would not only withdraw his kind influence; but if they persisted to be foolish, he would add to their folly: if they were wilfully blind, he would encrease their darkness, and bring a judi-

dicial

dicial blindness upon them. Were any of an obdurate, cruel, and relentless heart, proof against all conviction; he would harden that heart farther, and urge them on to the ruin, which they were seeking. In short it is the purpose of the Almighty, as there is evil in the world, to continually counteract the mischief, and by his divine wisdom to bring good out of evil. And if any persons are so unhappily depraved, as to render themselves useless members in the world, wherein they are conversant; it often seems good to the Deity to add to their infatuation, and render them ultimately useful, by making them objects of divine vengeance. For this is a lesson continually intimated in the sacred writings, *that from him, that hath not, shall be taken, even that which he hath.* And as every thing was from the beginning known to the all-wise God, he with his infinite wisdom superintends the whole, and manages it, not by any necessity, nor by absolute decrees, but by suffering persons to employ their faculties, and by remedying that evil, which must be the result of freedom. For evil must arise among beings, which are in their nature frail and imperfect. None of which evil will be laid to their charge, if they labour for improvement,

provement, and look up to heaven for assistance : and above all if they confess their imbecillity : and sue for pardon through the merits of their Redeemer. Whatever therefore occurs in scripture concerning judicial blindness, and God's appointment of things in the world, relates not to any arbitrary and original *decree*, but to the occasional interposition of the Deity. Thus Joseph says to his brethren. (Gen. xiv. 5.) *Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves ; that ye sold me hither ; for God did send me before you to preserve life. And again (ver. 8.) It was not you that sent me hither but God.*

(Exod. vi. 21.) The Deity says of Pharaoh, *I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.*

(Jof. xi. 20.) It is said of the Canaanites, *It was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel to battle ; that he might destroy them utterly.*

(Judges ix. 23.) *And God sent an evil spirit betwixt Abimelech and the men of Shechem : and*

the men of Shechem dwelt treacherously with Abimelech.

(1 Sam. ii. 25.) *They (the sons of Eli) hearkened not to the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them.*

(2 Chron. xviii. 20. 21.) *God permitted a lying spirit into the mouth of his (Ahab's) prophets in order to deceive him.*

(Matt. xi. 25.) *At that time Jesus answered, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*

In all these passages, and others, which you quote, we may perceive that there was a portion of light, to which particular people were not entitled: that the sons of folly and rebellion were condemned to be doubly infatuated: and that God continually interposed to preserve his church; and to confirm in their faith all such, as were devoted to his service. He made all evil subservient to this great purpose; turning it continually to advantage. This was effected by exposing the
weakness

weakness of worldly wisdom : by bringing upon his enemies illusions ; and by enhancing their infatuation, by way of example to others. You take notice of the death of our Saviour being decreed : and very truly. (Acts ii. 23.) *Him being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken ; and with wicked hands have crucified and slain.* When God by his wonderful prescience foresaw the falling off of mankind, he determined to counteract the evil by sending his Son into the world. So that every thing, which the Saviour of mankind suffered, was both foreknown, and determined by the Deity. But this was particular : and we must not argue from this instance of wisdom and goodness, that all mankind is under a blind necessity : nor conclude, because the Deity had determined to remedy the evil of the world ; that therefore he was the Author of all evil. In respect to mankind we know how they have been at all times invited to happiness. We read continually of prophets and holy men being sent to them, to remonstrate, to teach, and to persuade them, that they might change their way of life, and turn from iniquity. How can we suppose persons to be under an absolute necessity, who are

liable to be persuaded : or from a possibility of change infer that they are already determined ? You, Sir, in one place make mention of the Providence of God : and you say, that *a person, who sees in a strong light the doctrine of divine providence, cannot avoid speaking like a Necessarian upon the subject.* p. 130. The providence of the Deity appears to me not only plainly to be discovered through the whole process of the scriptures : but to be experimentally known. So far however from leading me to be a Necessarian, it seems to be in every respect repugnant to that doctrine. For what are we to understand by the term providence of God, but his wisdom continually exerted, and his power employed, for the conservation of the world, which he has created. By his divine interposition all things are upheld : and the purposes of man are furthered, suspended, or altered, according to his pleasure. But this interfering of the Deity is quite opposite to the doctrine of absolute decrees : and to your notion of an original impulse, and that *nothing could have been otherwise, than it has been, is, or is to be.* In ancient times we find, as has been before mentioned, that God was pleased to send prophets and holy men to persuade

persuade his people to turn from their evil ways: which shews, that they were at liberty to choose: and that there was a possibility for those, who rejected the truth, to have accepted the offers made. Hence it is impossible for them to have been predetermined by any foreign influence, such as you have supposed. You are too sagacious, Sir, not to see, that this quite ruins your system. When therefore you have mentioned the providence of God in one page, you seem to set it aside in the next. p. 131. In this you go great lengths. The interposition of the Deity mentioned in the Old and New Testament is not by you uniformly allowed. You aver boldly, that many particular events—*said expressly* to have been *appointed by God*, were not appointed by him: and even the persons, who have been represented as *inspired by God*, were not under any divine influence. p. 151. And you add in confirmation of what you have said, that in the instances, whatever they may be, to which you allude, there appears from the circumstances of the history to have been *no proper interposition of the Divine Being: no real miracle: but every thing took place according to the common established course of nature.* p. 131. As this is somewhat extraordinary,

traordinary, it is a pity that you did not illustrate what you maintain by some examples. What you may mean by there being no *proper* interposition, I know not. We have before us an alternative, which admits of no medium. The Deity either does interpose or he does not. Therefore if you are true to your principles you should speak out, and maintain without equivocation, that God does not at all interfere in the world: in other words, that there is no Providence. You proceed farther to intimate, that there is no secret influence of God's Holy Spirit; though it be a gift continually spoken of in the scriptures; and promised to the faithful as one of the greatest blessings. You accordingly tell us that *the good designs and actions of men are in the scriptures frequently ascribed to God; though there be no reason from the circumstances of the facts to suppose, that there was any supernatural influence upon their minds; but that they acted as well-disposed persons would naturally do in their situation.* p. 132. 'Though you speak with limitation, yet I think it is too plain, that you would set aside all occasional interposition of the Deity; all influence of the Holy Spirit in consequence of humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer: and resolve
every

every thing into an antecedent necessity, which renders the interfering of the Deity afterwards unnecessary and inconsistent. You ascribe indeed all things to God: but suppose them to be determined, and, if I understand you right, irrevocably fixed from all eternity. You are pleased to say farther, that *good men in the scriptures frequently ascribe their good works to God as the proper author of them; the giver of every good and perfect gift: and are the furthest in the world from having the least idea of their having any merit, or claim upon God in consequence of it: which upon the doctrine of philosophical free-will, they really have.* p. 133. You write, Sir, with so much reserve: and your words are so guarded, that I am not always sure, that I arrive at your true meaning. When you speak of *philosophical free-will*, I presume you mean free-will absolute: for I know not of any different sorts of free-will; nor of any limitations or degrees. And in respect to what you urge, that men would from hence be entitled to *merit*, and that they would have a *claim* upon the Deity, I cannot see any such consequence, that can be derived from it. The case has always appeared to me to be this. We have good and evil, life and death, placed

before us: and we are at full liberty to make our option. Those, who make a right use of their reason, and who have the fear of God before their eyes, will not fail to make a proper choice. But when this option is made, such is the imbecillity of their nature, that they cannot act up to their wishes: they are continually liable to fall away; and ruin their own good purposes. On this account, they are told to look up to heaven, and implore the divine assistance: that if they will but exert themselves and shew themselves zealous of good works, they shall be furthered in all that is good: and what they cannot of themselves effect, shall be brought to perfection through the influence of the Holy Spirit. This is the whole: and when this is done, they have the same claim upon the Deity, as a beggar has upon a Prince, who has given him leave to ask; and afterwards granted him his charity.

You are pleased however to persist in your opinion, that our wills and inclinations were from the beginning determined: and you have been at great pains to produce instances from the sacred writers to countenance this doctrine. Some of these are from the Apostles and Evangelists:

gelists: which however appear to me, as I have shewn, to have nothing to your purpose. And indeed you seem in reality to acknowledge it: and though you speak with your usual caution and reserve; yet you afford us too plainly an indication of your real opinion of those writers, to whom you pretended that you had been so much beholden. Your words are very remarkable. *Not that I think the sacred writers were, strictly speaking, Necessarians; for they were not Philosophers: but their habitual devotion naturally led them to refer all things to God without reflecting on the rigorous meaning of their language; and very probably, had they been interrogated upon the subject, they would have appeared not to be apprized of the proper extent of the Necessarian scheme; and would have answered in a manner unfavourable to it.* p. 133. Who must not after this pity the fate of the poor Apostles and Evangelists? Alas, Sir, how very low must they be in your estimation! They, who for ages were thought to have been inspired, and to have been peculiarly directed by the Spirit of truth, are at last supposed not to understand their own meaning. They were not, you say, strictly speaking, *Necessarians*. No, in good truth, Sir, nor were they in any respect

respect of that denomination. They were not, you say, *Philosophers*. It is true, Sir, they might not understand the doctrine of fixed air: nor had they ever made any discoveries in electricity. To the squaring of the circle they were probably utterly strangers. Yet believe me, Sir, they were great Philosophers. And however you may rate yourself above them, they were far your superiors in true knowledge. They were blest above others with rational philosophy, and likewise with a philosophy, to which reason could not possibly arrive: and which could only be obtained from the fountain of all wisdom. This they had in full plenitude: and the whole of our religion, and of our happiness in consequence of it, depends upon the testimony of these Apostles, whom you thus vilify and debase. Such were these lights of the world, these preachers of divine truth: who, it seems, if they had been interrogated by Dr. Priestly, would not have been able to have given him a proper answer.

SECTION XII.

AS you have mentioned the *philosophical* doctrine of Free-will, so you here introduce the *philosophical* doctrine of Necessity. And this chapter contains an account of the Calvinistic doctrine of Predestination compared with the philosophical doctrine of Necessity. Of the former you give an unfavourable representation: and shew the fatal consequences, which result from this opinion. But after all, your principles are the same: though you form different conclusions. You are both absolute Predestinarians; however you may differ in inference and deduction. It is your opinion, that of mankind all will be saved: Mr. Toplady asserts that many will be saved: the rigid Calvinists, that there will be very few. But this is all surmise; and arises from the pride of human reason, which will determine, though there may be no grounds for determination. These notions do not affect the article of Predestination, which you all maintain alike: though you on your part would fain make a distinction. The Calvinists, you tell us, differ from you in this: their *system intirely*
excludes

excludes the popular notion of free-will, viz. the liberty or power of doing, what we please, virtuous, or vicious, as belonging to every person in every situation: which is perfectly consistent with the doctrine of philosophical Necessity; and indeed results from it. p. 158. If, as you here say, liberty be consistent with your system, how came you at any time to give it up, and to make void in one place, what you maintain in another? Be pleased, Sir, to attend to your own words, which I have been obliged more than once to allude to. *I was not, however, a ready convert to the doctrine of Necessity.—I gave up my liberty with great reluctance; and in a long correspondence, which I once had upon the subject, I maintained very strenuously the doctrine of Liberty—*(Preface p. xxxi.) but it seems you finally renounced it: and all through your treatise have been arguing for an absolute Necessity. How this is consistent with what you maintain here, I know not: or with that, which you elsewhere insist upon through an hundred and thirty pages. You, like all other Predestinarians, hold that every thing has been ordained from the beginning; and is enforced by an irresistible influence, so that nothing could have been otherwise, than it has been.

been. You afterwards speak of the disposition of man, and the tendency of his mind: upon which you make your supposed liberty to depend. (p. 64.) But how comes it, when all things were antecedently determined, that the disposition of man should have been left free? When all our actions, and all our thoughts, were under a previous irresistible influence: when neither our good works, nor our evil, originate in ourselves; when all our inclinations are biaſſed and even forced; how is it poſſible for the diſpoſition to enjoy this freedom? The world, I fear, Sir, will hardly think you ſincere in theſe your opinions. For it is certain, that what you grant in one place, you make void in another.

You ſuppoſe throughout, that there has been an uninterrupted chain of cauſes and effects: and that the foreknowledge of the Deity ariſes from hence, and from hence only. And, as all events are open to his view, that he judges from hence concerning things to come; and has no other means of judging. You proceed farther upon theſe premiſes, and infer, that as the Deity foreſees things, which happen, they therefore could not be otherwiſe, than they always are, and upon this you found your doctrine of
Necceſſity:

Necessity : as if, had things happened otherwise, they would not have been equally foreseen by the Deity. Hence it is, that like other Predestinarians, you are led to suppose an unavoidable and uncontrollable influence over all our thoughts and actions. But as I have repeatedly said, Foreknowledge has no more influence over what is to come, than retrospect has upon what is past ; or immediate intuition on that, which is before us. Yet upon this you found your Necessity, and think it a new discovery. But it is the same as the Fate of the Stoics ; which has been canvassed for ages. They maintained the same chain of causes and effects : from whence they deduced their doctrine both of Necessity and Fate. In this they were not uniform : but each explained his notions according to his own fancy, and as arguments arose, which seemed to accord to his favourite system. The Philosopher Heraclitus held, that all things were ordered by an inevitable impulse ; which he termed *αναγκη* and *εμπαρμενη*, *Necessity and Fate*. Others separated these two, and distinguished between them : maintaining, that the will and the actions of men, were determined only by *εμπαρμενη*, Fate. *Αναγκη*, *Necessity*, was a blind, inevitable, and overbearing

overbearing power, not always admitted; but *ειμαρμενη*, Fate, consisted of a *series and combination of causes* by appointment: *συμπλοκην αιτιων τεταγμενην*; and by this all human affairs were supposed to be determined. Plutarch de Plac. Philos. l. i. c. xxix. p. 885. Cicero speaks to the same purpose. *Fatum autem id appello, quod Græci ειμαρμενην*: id est, ordinem ferientque causarum; cum causæ causa nexa rem ex se gignat. Ea est ex omni æternitate fluens veritas sempiterna. De Divinatione. The same was the opinion of Chrysippus the Stoic. *Fatum est, inquit, sempiterna quædam et indeclinabilis series rerum, et catena volvens semetipsa sese, et implicans per æternas consequentiæ ordines, &c.* A. Gell. l. vi. c. 2. p. 364.

But the antients were not unanimous in their opinions upon this head. They not only doubted from whence the necessity spoken of proceeded; but they also varied about the extent and influence of fate. It was apparent that so much evil as well as inconsistency arose from it, that they were, many of them, at last obliged to compromise matters, and to allow, that though some things were directed

by a superiour influence; yet that others were left to the free will of man.—ὥς τε τὰ μὲν εἰμαρθαι, τὰ δὲ ἀνείμαρθαι. Plut. *ibid.* So that some things were subject to Fate; but others not so. You, Sir, are pleased to go beyond these Philosophers upon their own principles: and insist upon an universal and absolute necessity. Had the sages above partaken of the salutary light, which we now enjoy, their Fate would probably have amounted to no more, than the order and institution of things, and the general interposition of Providence, by which the world is superintended: and by which we are occasionally directed. The Stoic Boethus acknowledged, like others, a series of causes, which he termed Fate: yet he seems to have meant little more by it, than the *common course and order of nature*. Εἰς δὲ εἰμαρμένη αἰτία τῶν ὄντων ἐίρομένη, καθ' ὃν ὁ κόσμος διεξάγεται. *Fate is a series of causes, connected as it were by a chain; in other words, that reason and influence, by which the world is carried on.* Diog. Laert. Zeno. p. 459. This is the purport of the words, when explained. Chrysippus seems to have been of the same opinion: for he was against *Necessity*, though he argued for *Fate*. He maintained—Εἰμαρμένην εἶναι φυσικὴν συντάξιν τῶν ὄλων: *that Fate was*
nothing

nothing but the natural connection of things in the universe. A. Gellius *supra*. Stobæus, speaking of the Stoical tenets, seems to define it expressly to be the superintendence of God. ΛΟΓΟΥ ΤΩΝ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΚΟΣΜΩ ΠΡΟΝΟΙΑ ΔΙΟΙΚΗΜΕΝΩΝ. *The established reason and order, by which through Providence the things of the world are governed.* Stobæi *Physic.*

You are therefore in some degree mistaken, when you affirm, *that what the ancients have said on the subject is altogether foreign to the purpose: their Fate being quite a different thing from the Necessity of the moderns.* For though they had an idea of the certainty of the final events of some things, they had no idea of the necessary connection of all the preceding means to bring about the designed end; and least of all, had they any just idea, of the mechanism of the mind, depending upon the certain influence of motives to determine the will; by means of which the whole series of events, from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things, makes one connected chain of causes and effects, &c. &c. Preface. p. xxv. It is seen from the quotations above, that their *Fate* was deduced from the same principles, on which you found your doctrine

of *Necessity*. Both depend upon a long chain of causes expressly so mentioned : so that your system is far from having in it any thing new. Only thus much is to be observed, that the more moderate of the Philosophers of old, and among the rest Chrysippus, did not carry their opinions to the same length, as you have done. For however you may extenuate in some places, what you have said ; yet you insist upon *absolute necessity*. p. 18 : and that *no event could have been otherwise, than it has been, is, or is to be*. p. 8. Some of the wisest among the ancients thought the arguments, drawn from a supposed chain of events, to be equivocal and dangerous, as they deprived people of free will, and led many to desperation. Among these was Cicero. *Qui introducunt causarum seriem sempiternam, ii mentem hominum necessitate devinciunt*. Cicero de Fato. p. 1283. He farther mentions that Chrysippus had so embarrassed himself by his system of causes and effects, that he could not well clear himself of the dangerous consequences, which followed ; and which he disavowed. *Chrysippus autem cum et necessitatem improbare, et nihil vellet sine præpositis causis evenire, causarum genera distinguit, ut et necessitatem effugiat, et retineat Fatum*. Ibid.

This

This very learned and acute Philosopher makes the following conclusion; wherein he determines the controversy between Chrysippus, and those, who opposed him. *Omninoque, cum hæc sit distinctio, ut in quibusdam rebus vere dici possit, cum hæ causæ antegressæ sint, non esse in nostrâ potestate, quin illæ eveniant, quorum causæ fuerint: quibusdam autem in rebus, causis antegressis, in nostrâ tamen esse potestate, ut aliud aliter eveniat: hanc distinctionem utrique approbant.* Ibid. p. 1284. From hence, I think, we may have the opinion of Cicero, who allows, that there are some causes, which in the course of things must inevitably take place. But there are other causes, whose influence and tendency may be opposed and surmounted, so that contrary to your notion, a thing, which at any time happened, *might have happened otherwise*, if we had chosen it. By these means the will is left free; and the mind quite at liberty in respect to Necessity and Fate.

From the above you will see, Sir, that your opinion is by no means new: but has been long ago. canvassed, and confuted, You say, that in the prosecution of your system, you have been led chiefly by Collins, Hume, and

Hobbes. What chain of causes was it, what fatal necessity, that linked you with this inglorious triumvirate? For however high you, and some others, may rate these writers: yet, whoever abuses his talents, and writes with an ill design, is in my eye inglorious. And I am sorry to say, that there was no necessity in the case, nor any absolute decree, which forced you into this association. It was quite a voluntary act: and we may too plainly perceive, that a conformity of opinion, and an approbation of their doctrines, led you to a union with these persons. This has been a great misfortune: for the world would have been glad to have found Dr. Priestly in better company.

There is a passage, Sir, as far back, as your dedication, which I should be unwilling to pass by unnoticed. It is where you are speaking of your principles, and have the following words. *In these principles alone do we find a perfect coincidence between true religion and philosophy; and by the help of the latter, we are able to demonstrate the excellence of the moral precepts of the former.* p. xv. This is paying a poor compliment to the sacred writings, and to the precepts contained in them, to think, they

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stand

stand in need of any such feeble support. Besides it is inverting the order of things: for the philosophy of the world should be tried by the Scriptures: and not the Scriptures by the opinions of men: unless you give up a material article; and will not allow the Scriptures to be the word of God. Ill has it always fared with religion, when the morality and doctrines of the sacred writings have been modelled and interpreted according to the fashion of the world, and the opinions of conceited men, falsely called philosophy. I am sensible, that genuine philosophy cannot be repugnant to the Scriptures: but where is it to be found? Oftentimes what is stiled philosophy to-day, is absurdity to-morrow: yet we would fain warp the Scriptures, and level them to our own capacity: and call this *demonstration*. This mode of illustration began very early; and was carried on by Justin and Clemens, and so on by other of the Fathers to the time of Origen. It has at intervals been revived, and brought down to the present times. But though there have been advantages of much consequence accruing from the store of learning introduced by these means, yet religion itself has often been hurt by it. Many have engaged themselves in this pursuit.

pursuit with a good intent : but we have reason
 to fear, that others have made use of these fo-
 reign helps with an evil design; that they
 might corrupt by a seeming improvement; and
 ruin by affecting to establish. This, Sir, I
 trust, is not the case with you : though I ad-
 mire, that you did not see the fatal conse-
 quences of your system. You take notice of
 several persons of note, who have written more
 or less on the same subject; yet they have none
 of them in your opinion been precisely in the
 right. Mr. Locke is greatly mistaken : Pref.
 p. xxix. Mr. Edwards is not always to the
 purpose : p. 122. Mr. Hobbes fails *in his solu-
 tion of the difficulty* : p. 118. And lastly Mr.
 Hume, p. 118. *intirely abandons the doctrine of
 Necessity to the most immoral and shocking conse-
 quences*. I should have thought, that the lapses
 of these persons might fortunately have led
 you to have suspected your own strength; and
 rendered you less sanguine and determinate.
 As to the consequences from Mr. Hume's
 stating of the case, which appear so immoral
 and shocking; the very same arise from your
 own principles, however you may try to evade
 them. You may shift your ground, and
 endeavour to shake them off: but they
 stick

stick like the shirt of Hercules : and attend you, wherever you go. You mention the disposition of man, as an expedient to qualify matters : and speak of the ultimate and intention, when a train of evils are introduced. But this will not prove a satisfactory answer to the Sceptic and Atheist. They will hardly think, that by this subterfuge you get rid of the difficulty, when the old demand is made—*Ποθεν το κακον*. You will not persuade them, nor indeed any reasonable person, that good and evil depend upon *intention* ; and that any purpose of the agent can make them change their nature. You will have many objections still made : and many perplexing questions asked. Of some I have already taken notice : particularly of those introduced by Mr. Hume ; as you quote him. To these you have given no satisfactory answer ; nor can you upon your principles : though the difficulty may be, and I trust, has been satisfactorily solved. The same shocking consequences, which he draws from the doctrine of Necessity, must necessarily follow from your system : which indeed is the very same, which he has embraced, and which he boldly defends. It is in vain to talk of the disposition of man ; and the intention, when
evil

evil is created. These expedients are of little weight. According to your system, evil is supposed to be necessary and unavoidable. Is it not then more rational to refer what is called moral evil to the abuse of liberty in man; than to the all-wise and all-powerful Deity, the Father of all purity and goodness? That there is a falling off we both allow: but we differ in the cause. By me it is imputed to man, and to the abuse of his powers: By you, to that God, who is all perfection, who speaks of it as an abomination: and denounces his vengeance against it.

THE END.



